THE

# LAW OF NATURE

DEFENDED BY

# SCRIPTURE:

Againſt a learned claſs of MODERNS, who think it needful, in order to ſupport the credit of REVEALED RELIGION againſt DEISTS, to deny the EXISTENCE of that LAW.

## AN AXIOM.

The ſpirit of a man is of a nobler make than the ſpirit of a beaſt; the former being ſo made as naturally to receive, from ſurrounding objects, and the courſe of things, impreſſions of a higher order than the latter is capable of.

## WARRANTED BY SCRIPTURE.

Gen. ii. 7. *And the Lord God formed man of the duſt of the ground, and breathed into his noſtrils the breath of life; and man became a living ſoul.* Job xxxii. 8. *There is a ſpirit in man; and the breath of the Almighty giveth them underſtanding.* Chap. xxxv. 11. *Who teacheth us more than the beaſts of the earth, and maketh us wiſer than the fowls of heaven.* Prov. xx. 27. *The ſpirit of man is the candle of the Lord, ſearching all the inward parts of the belly.*

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BRITISH MUSEUM

# ADVERTISEMENT.

*AS this pamphlet conſiſts of extracts of letters lately wrote by ſeveral perſons; thoſe againſt the law of nature, being three in number, may, for the eaſe of the reader, be diſtinguiſhed by the names,* Protos, Deuteros, *and* Tritos; *and the two for it, may be called* Junius *and* Lucius. *It being the deſign of this publication, to let the reader ſee what uſe is made of the ſcripture on both ſides, and give him an opportunity of judging which ſide is beſt ſupported by it, the extracts have been made accordingly; many paſſages of the letters that appeared of leſs conſequence to this deſign being omitted in the extracts. Likewiſe expreſſions of addreſs are ſometimes either changed or removed, in order to avoid pointing out the perſon of the letter-writer or his correſpondent. It muſt be owned at the ſame time, that the letters on both ſides have been ſince their date freely handed about among both friends and antagoniſts to the letter-writers; nor has any reſerve in this reſpect been requeſted by either ſide. As the letters, however, were not written for the preſs, it may be proper to beſpeak the reader's indulgence to the ſtyle, while he is invited ſtrictly to examine the ſtrain of reaſoning. As to which laſt, it may ſuffice to ſay, that, in controverſial letters, written with a view to be examined by keen antagoniſts, it may be preſumed the letter-writers would endeavour to do their beſt in point of argument. If any of the writers ſhall apprehend that too much of any of his letters is ſuppreſſed in theſe extracts, he may reflect, that the deficiency may eaſily be ſupplied, that the field is open, and that he is at liberty either to publiſh them at length, or to exhibit, in what form he pleaſes, whatever new arguments ſhall occur to him for the ſtrengthening of his plea. Mean time this publication may ſerve in general as a ſtimulus, to thoſe who have ſtudied the ſubject, to bring forth what they ſhall think needful for the further illuſtration of it.*



*Thoſe*

*Thoſe who would ſee more fully than is exhibited in theſe extracts, how the plea againſt the law of nature is at preſent conducted, may conſult theſe three pamphlets.*

1. *A creed founded on truth and common ſenſe; with ſome ſtrictures on the origin of our ideas, the primary deſign of the decalogue, the light, law, and religion of nature, natural conſcience and the moral ſenſe.* London 1750. R Spavan.

2. *An eſſay on inſpiration; or, An attempt to ſhew, that the pretences of the ancient and modern Zamzummim were and are deceptions. Wherein the fundamental principles of* Barclay, *in his apology for the Quakers, are refuted; the neceſſity of an external revelation proved, and the fiction of an internal one exploded.* London 1756. Withers.

3. *A diſſertation upon the ſuppoſed exiſtence of a moral law of nature, and upon the being of a triune God. Wherein is ſhewn, that the idea of the former is not to be found in ſcripture, and is contrary to reaſon; and that the latter is contained in ſcripture, and is not contrary to reaſon.* London 1757. Withers.

*Alſo a book in two volumes, called, Sophron; or, Nature's characteriſtics of the truth.* London 1759. Withers.

*The controverſy maintained in the following pages is opened by Protos inviting Junius to conſider the three pamphlets now mentioned.*

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The

# The Law of Nature defended by Scripture:

## BEING

## EXTRACTS of LETTERS on the Queſtion, Whether ſuch a Law exiſts?

### LETTER I.

### PROTOS to JUNIUS.

*July* 13. 1758.

— — — — After the author of the three pamphlets lately ſent you, had annihilated the natural conſcience, the moral ſenſe, the light and law of nature, and expelled theſe nonentities out of his creed, and attempted their extirpation from the face of the earth, and from every ſyſtem of divinity and common ſenſe, who could have expected to ſee him cenſured for having a bias to the popular preachers? There is no danger, Sir, of any connection with them, after an attempt to rob them of thoſe firſt principles, and to cut off their ground of boaſting: for when you have done that, you have ſtripped them of their pride, and left them nothing to ſet up with: nor have they, after that, any pretence to any power to make themſelves differ from others. As long as we conceive we have any innate or natural power, conſcience, light, ſenſe, law, *&c.* in our poſſeſſion, the fewel of pride is ready piled; thoſe are its combuſtibles, and only need kindling. The leaven of religious pride has its ſpirit here; it is compounded of thoſe ingredients; take them away, and the paſte will not puff.

You may ſee in the forementioned pamphlets, (if you think them worth looking at), that the author has made very free with the law of nature, *&c.* and attempted to ſtamp it with perpetual infamy, conceiving it to be contrary to the goſpel at point blank, and that every ſyſtem

of divinity into which it is admitted muſt be greatly embarraſſed thereby: for ſo far as we think we are inſtructed concerning God, his worſhip, *&c.* by that, ſo far revelation is ſuperſeded; ſo far as the moral ſenſe, *&c.* is exalted, ſo far the croſs of Chriſt ſinks in our eſteem.

Will you admit, that nature teaches us, God is eſſentially kind to the righteous, and averſe to the wicked?—This, Sir, is the key-ſtone of Deiſm; and when you have granted the Deiſts ſo much, they will ſeize the reſt whether you will or not.—Beſides, it is a poor compliment to the ſcriptures, to think we can diſcover any thing concerning God without them; and he that can make ſuch diſcovery, muſt be the wiſeſt man that ever was born, or———. Why do ſome Heathen nations worſhip no god? (for ſuch there are now); why do others worſhip two, a good and an evil one? why do others worſhip the evil one, upon a preſumption that he will be appeaſed thereby, and that the good one will bleſs them without being worſhipped at all? And if it be true, that reaſon is ſo ſtrong as to make ſome diſcoveries about God without an external revelation, how comes it to paſs, that it cannot proceed ſo as to ſtand in need of none? Or is the doctrine of the atonement the only one in revelation wherein reaſon falls ſhort? Theſe are not captious, but plain queſtions, Sir; and with all kind of reſpect I requeſt you to ſolve them to yourſelf.——

The atonement is the reſult of infinite wiſdom for the ſalvation of ſinners; the law of nature, *&c.* is the contrivance of the devil, to prop their pride and blind their eyes. The former is the foundation of Chriſtianity, more firm than the ſtability of nature; its centre, wherein all its lines meet; the latter a metaphyſical vapour, leſs fixed than a phantom, an evaneſcent diſſipation of reaſon. This, I hope, you will find proved, if you dare riſk the loſs of fifteen minutes, in reading the appendix to Dr Foſter at the end of the *Creed founded on truth*, &c.---- When you have allowed for ſome defects in the ſtyle, if you are totally diſappointed, it will caſt a ſhade on men of the moſt learning in England, from many of whom the author received letters of thanks for writing it.——

*Yours*, &c. PROTOS.

LET-

## LETTER II.

### JUNIUS to PROTOS.

*October 5.* 1758.

——— I have conſidered the three pamphlets lately ſent me, and ſhall briefly give you my thoughts of the ſpirit that runs through them. I readily perceive in them the man of learning, courage, and vivacity. Of language and ſtyle I am no nice judge. I am for giving and taking indulgence in that reſpect. The author is ſufficiently perſpicuous, and that is enough, at leaſt, all I ſeek in a writer. What I am chiefly concerned about is the ſpirit, ſcope and tendency of what is written. Now, before I remark on his writings, I would firſt, to prevent miſtakes, ſignify, in two particulars, what I do not blame in regard to the ſpirit of a writer. 1. I think it ridiculous to find fault with his ſpirit, if his doctrine be juſt and true: for to me it is evident, that if his ſpirit be faulty, it muſt be owing to ſome error in doctrine. 2. I am not diſpleaſed to ſee a man, in matters of the higheſt importance, holding what he holds in the moſt tenacious manner, or oppoſing what he condemns with the utmoſt vehemence. I am rather pleaſed to ſee a man in good earneſt, and not playing faſt and looſe about ſacred things.—Yet the ſpirit of his writings appears to me, in ſeveral views, unſuitable to the ſpirit which breathes in the ſcripture. I cannot propoſe to enlarge on particulars here.—In the general, I think the ſpirit of his writings cenſurable by many paſſages of ſcripture, of which I ſhall here give a ſample, under the following heads. "1. He ſhall not ſtrive nor cry, *&c.* 2. Let no man de- "ceive himſelf: if any man among you ſeemeth to be "wiſe in this world, let him become a fool that he may "be wiſe, *&c.* 3. —The word of prophecy, whereunto "ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light ſhining in "a dark place, until the day ſhould dawn.——Knowing "this firſt, that no prophecy of the ſcripture is of any "private interpretation, *&c.*"

His neglect of the leſſon laſt quoted from Peter, I conſider as the ſource of all his miſtakes. He firſt ſettles his notions, by acting the critic on the Old Teſtament, and then the New muſt either agree, or be laid aſide till freſh evidence caſt up for ſettling accounts betwixt the Hebrew and Greek languages. I need not ſtay to tell in how many reſpects this method of ſtudying the ſcripture appears exceptionable to me: but one thing is obvious at firſt ſight, that it ſerves to diſcourage, and awaken envy in, the unlearned, and to lead the wiſe man, the philoſopher, and critic, to glory in his wiſdom, as making him ſome way fitter for fellowſhip with God, and the kingdom of heaven. I have had occaſion, in ſtriking inſtances, to obſerve the effects of it, and to ſee how little it profited thoſe who have been occupied therein. It was deviſed at firſt for the ſervice of high church, and it is eaſy to ſee how well it is fitted for that ſervice. And I rarely ſee it followed by diſſenters, but at the ſame time I obſerve it begets in them more or leſs of the ſpirit of high church. Even in our author's writings I obſerve a conſiderable air of that ſort of reſpect and zeal for Chriſt, which was ſeverely rebuked in Peter, when he ſaid, *Be it far from thee, Lord, this ſhall not be unto thee.* He ſeems to think, that by rights Chriſtianity ought to have the precedence on the open theatre of the world, as the moſt reſpectable ſcheme for ſenſe, wiſdom, learning, and true philoſophy; and he is ready to combat all as idiots, and deſtitute of common ſenſe, who refuſe the honour he thinks due to Chriſt and his religion. He ſeems to ſtrive and hope for the time when that religion ſhall look out with more reſpect and advantage in the world. But Chriſt, inſtead of leading his diſciples to expect any ſuch thing before his ſecond coming, ſays, *When the Son of man cometh, ſhall he find faith on the earth?* and he compares that time to the days of Noah and Lot.—— Our author inclines much to commend Chriſtianity as the beſt ſcheme for making good ſubjects to the government, and to deſcribe infidels as influenced by principles averſive of our public peace and ſafety. This is likewiſe out of the channel of the zeal taught us by the apoſtles, who always commend Chriſtianity to us as advantageous only

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in reſpect of the world to come.——Moreover, it does not appear to me that he ſtands ſufficiently clear of the intolerant ſpirit which abounds ſo much in Mr Hutchinſon's writings. I ſay this the rather, becauſe I think it incumbent on every friend to toleration, who proceeds more or leſs on that author's plan, to ſhew his averſion, in the moſt explicit manner, to his intolerant principles. Though I am well ſatisfied, that our author cannot exceed in his abhorrence of Quakeriſm, yet I cannot reliſh any thing like grudging the people of that perſuaſion any degree of indulgence they enjoy under the preſent government, even though not preciſely within the toleration-act, as he ſeems to do, near the end of his *Eſſay on Inſpiration*. But we have a broader hint concerning infidels in general, at the cloſe of the *Creed founded on truth*, &c. "But while they ſet up their own vain imaginations and reaſonings againſt ſcripture, and lean on their own underſtandings, inſtead of ſubmitting to be guided by their Maker; I ſhall not ceaſe to treat them as ſtrangers to God's word, to his works, to themſelves, to human nature, and to common ſenſe; and think too, if the plague ought to be cured, if falſehood and folly ought to be detected, or a gangrene ſtopped, their whole ſyſtem ought to be abhorred by all wiſe governments and good Chriſtians: and thus for the preſent I take my leave of them." How foreign, how oppoſite to the doctrine and ſpirit of the goſpel!

But the queſtion, If there be a law of nature? claims my attention moſt at preſent. The zeal for the negative, which, ſo far as can I learn, was firſt propagated from high church, puts me in mind of a kind of zeal for atonement ſhewn by many, with a view to fix our dependence on an order of mortal prieſts. Were men to be thrown looſe of what are called the natural notions of right and wrong, and of ſuch tranſlations of ſcripture as providence has provided them, in order to get their information about their comfort and duty from churchmen, and men of leiſure for criticiſm, I apprehend they would, at leaſt, be in as bad circumſtances as the people of thoſe countries where the ſcripture is retained in a language

language unknown to the vulgar. Beſides, if our governors were to imbibe ſuch notions of right and wrong as Mr Hutchinſon and other learned critics have of late preſumed to vouch as the language of ſcripture, it is clear as ſunſhine, that our highly privileged iſland would ſoon become a ſcaffold for ſpiritual pride to diſplay its mercileſs tyranny, and that the moſt impious inhumanity would ſoon break through all thoſe ties which the vulgar ſtill call natural.

When I am called upon to prove the exiſtence of a law of nature, I find myſelf at much the ſame kind of diſadvantage, as I would be at in proving againſt the Biſhop of Cloyne the exiſtence of matter. It is difficult to reaſon with one who denies firſt principles. In moſt other reaſonings, the law of nature is appealed to as the laſt reſort: but where ſhall we begin if this is denied? Our author himſelf is obliged, on occaſions, to make a laſt appeal to the human breaſt, or to common ſenſe; and to call ſome actions brutal, ſhocking, *&c.* which expreſſions convey no meaning to me, unleſs they import what is commonly underſtood, when we ſay, unnatural, and inhumane.

I might here reſt the matter, and with a good grace, I think, ſave myſelf farther trouble, by pleading, that the reaſonings in defence of the law of nature, that have been publiſhed much about as lately as thoſe of our author againſt it, remain hitherto unanſwered. Yet, not to be nice with you, I ſhall at preſent ſuperſede that plea.—I muſt likewiſe ſet aſide the weight of the moſt learned in England in this caſe; for what our author has wrote may very well be applauded by them, and yet found diſagreeable to the New Teſtament by a very unlearned man, and that without any air of pretending to rival the learned. Beſides, if the learned were to be reckoned upon here, I would have too great advantage over you. I would have Dr Owen, and all the learned of the laſt age, and for aught I know, of every former age; and in the preſent age, not to mention others, the late Lord Preſident Forbes, one of Mr Hutchinſon's moſt careful readers, and who firſt promoted attention to his writings in Scotland.

Now,

Now, our firſt buſineſs, I apprehend, is, to inquire, whence the queſtion ariſes, in order that we may ſet out from ſome fixed point. I think it muſt have been ſtarted by believers of a divine revelation, either, 1ſt, as finding the denial of natural law ſomeway advantageous to the cauſe of that revelation; or, 2dly, as finding ſuch denial expreſsly declared in, ſo a part of that revelation. For all others muſt have concluded thoſe ſentiments, wherein people of different cuſtoms and traditions are agreed, to be natural, or founded in the conſtitution of man, as knowing no where elſe to ſeek for them.

1. Now, as to the firſt of theſe conſiderations, I cannot ſee what advantage believers can have againſt Deiſts by the denial of natural law. Such denial rather ſerves, in my view, to put an effectual ſtop to all reaſoning betwixt them. For how ſhall I urge on men the evidence and excellency of ſupernatural knowledge, if I allow them no natural knowledge? I ſee nothing left me to do, but to deſire them, upon the credit of my experience, to be ſo obliging as to diveſt themſelves of all the notions they preſently call natural, and wait till I read them a ſet of new ones out of my favourite book.

2. I cannot ſee how any man's pride can be flattered, by granting him, that he naturally knows his duty better than he practiſes it. Yea, unleſs this be proved to his conviction, inſtead of granted, I ſee not how his pride can be properly abaſed. What advantages Deiſts and others will ſeize upon, if natural law be granted them, I know not. No doubt, whether I will or not, they will take hold of every advantage they can think of for diſcrediting or perverting the goſpel, and quieting their own conſciences. I do not pretend to hinder them; nor do I expect that any kind of reaſoning, however clear and ſtrong, will ever put them out of countenance till Chriſt come. It is enough for me, if I be kept in poſſeſſion of my own creed, ſo as they may not ſeize it from me, by making me doubt of it myſelf. Deiſts and popular preachers are welcome for me to proceed in their own way. But one thing I have a full and clear experience of, that the more extenſive notions of duty any man pretends to have, either naturally or by acquiſition,

acquiſition, the greater advantage I have againſt him, in evincing the vanity of his pretenſions to righteouſneſs; and conſequently of commending the goſpel to his attention.

3. If Heathens, or thoſe who never heard of Chriſt, are not ſinners, they have no need of the goſpel, which is a doctrine of repentance, and remiſſion of ſin. But men are not ſinners, or obnoxious to the judgment of God, unleſs they have tranſgreſſed ſome divine law: for where no law is, there can be no tranſgreſſion. If then Heathens can be convinced of ſin, it muſt be by ſuch a law as is directly evinced from the heart of man. For human tradition, the great corrupter of divine laws, can never be admitted as the rule by which God will judge the actions of men. In a word, if there be no law of nature, men are naturally free, or, I may ſay, incapable of that miſery for which the goſpel propoſes relief.

Now, as to the ſecond conſideration, concerning what is expreſsly declared in ſcripture on this point; I have good reaſon to conclude, that the notion of denying natural law, was never found in, nor ſuggeſted by the ſcripture; but that ſome reaſoners, having once ſtarted, and found it convenient to ſerve purpoſes of their own, quite foreign to the deſign of the goſpel, have endeavoured to force it upon the ſcripture. Yea, it is enough to make me conclude thus, to obſerve what ſtrange ſhifts they uſe to preſs Paul into their ſervice, or rather to invalidate his evidence againſt them. Mr Romaine would explain Paul by one of our common proverbs, and perſuade us that by cuſtom the Gentiles did the things contained in the law; for, ſays he, cuſtom is a ſecond nature. Others, ſpeaking of the diſcovery of God manifeſt in the Gentiles, would perſuade us, that God ſhewed it to them, by giving ſome revelation of it to their remote anceſtors, ſo as the Gentiles in Paul's time could find it only in ſome obſcure, vague traditions; though Paul himſelf refers, for that diſcovery, directly to *the things that are made*. But, perhaps, as I have heard ſuggeſted, ſome will be apt to plead, that by Paul's expreſſion, τοις ποιημασι, we are not to underſtand God's viſible

viſible works, but certain old ſongs handed down by tradition, from which the knowledge of God might be gathered, in like manner as Homer is ſaid to have compoſed his Iliad out of old ballads.—— Their treatment of the New Teſtament on this point, is very like their treatment of it on another notable topic of theirs. They will have it, that the cherubim were deſigned as a repreſentation of the Trinity. They find an objection to this raiſed from John's Apocalypſe, where the cherubim are deſcribed as worſhipping, and giving thanks, for their redemption. To obviate this objection, they remind us of ſome paſſage in Homer, where Jupiter is repreſented as nodding aſſent to the worſhip paid him; and accordingly they would have us underſtand the worſhip of the cherubim to be ſimilar to Jupiter's nod of approbation. When men have once aſſumed the front to treat the ſcriptures in this manner, it is difficult to ſay if any thing is capable of putting them to the bluſh.—— But to return:

When I am to conſult the mind of the ſcripture, I muſt ſet aſide unſcriptural diſtinctions, and ſtriving about words: for I apprehend that the plea againſt the law of nature proceeds partly on a vain ſtrife about words, and partly on a real contradiction to the mind of the ſcripture.

1. If the ſcripture, then, is to determine the controverſy about a law of nature, I have no occaſion to ſtrive with philoſophers about their diſtinctions concerning innate ideas. It is enough for me to underſtand the words *nature* and *natural* in the ſame ſenſe as they are uſed in ſcripture. I ſay then, with Paul, that the common propenſity between the ſexes, which ſtands at the head of all the other relations among mankind, is natural; and that a ſimilar propenſity between thoſe of the ſame ſex, is unnatural, or againſt nature; ſo highly criminal. No other argument is needful to evince this, than an appeal to the human heart. In like manner, the other relations formed by nature between parents and their offſpring, between children of the ſame parents, *&c.* demand ſuitable affection and behaviour: and to counteract that affection, is to act an unnatural part, to do

τα μη καθηκοντα, things improper, unbecoming, ſhocking, or, according to our tranſlators, which are not convenient. Of which unbecoming actions Paul gives a liſt under the epithets by which he ſtigmatizes the actors, of whom he at the ſame time affirms, that they knew the judgment of God with regard to ſuch actions.—— The ſcripture every where appeals to the human breaſt, as fixing the law of natural affection.——*Can a woman forget her ſucking child?—Ye being evil, know to give good gifts to your children.—Let there be no ſtrife, I pray thee, between me and thee, for we are brethren.—Like as a father pitieth his children, ſo the Lord pitieth them that fear him,*" &c. &c.

2. I apprehend, then, it would be departing from the point in hand, to inquire what impreſſions of duty mankind would have had, if they had been otherwiſe framed and ſituate than they are; that is, if they had not been made male and female, parents, children, brethren, *&c.* but every individual produced and ſupported in a ſeparate iſland by himſelf. In that caſe, I am far from thinking they could have any notion of the laws which ariſe from kindred and ſociety: for if one man never knew that there was another, he could have no notion of any reciprocal duty betwixt him and another. But taking mankind as they are, this maxim will be found to carry demonſtration with it round the globe, that we ought to do to men as we think they ought to do to us. No tradition, no cuſtom, can ever ſhake our approbation of this maxim, however much we depart from it in our practice. Accordingly Paul, ſpeaking of mankind in their natural ſtate, as he found them, not of men peculiarly privileged, as Jews and Chriſtians, but of the nations, the Heathen, ſays, *they are a law unto themſelves*, and *that they ſhew the work of the law written in their hearts*; not indeed by their obedience to it, but by their mutual accuſations and apologies touching the breaches of it. And this indeed is the proper work of divine law, even to give men the knowledge of ſin.

3. Paul's deſign in his firſt three chapters to the Romans, is evidently to ſtop every mouth, that all the world might become guilty before God. And he is confident

fident that he hath evinced his point; for he ſays, in his third chapter, *We have proved both Jews and Gentiles that they are all under ſin.* And this proof he brings in order to ſhew the neceſſity and excellency of the goſpel as a ſupernatural diſcovery of mercy or ſalvation from ſin, and to evince the juſtice of God in judging the world, and taking vengeance on all diſobedience. Theſe two points go hand in hand together; for unleſs the latter be ratified in our conſciences, we can never be appriſed of the benefit of the former.

4. The proof of guilt againſt both Jews and Gentiles is made out, by ſhewing, that they are without excuſe. This is ſhewn from the reſpective intimations they had of the judgment or law of God. And Paul's manner of conducting the charge againſt the one claſs, ſerves greatly to illuſtrate his proceſs with the other: yea, ſo ſimilar is the charge, and the manner of evincing it, that his language frequently affects the caſe of both with equal force; and, if rightly attended to, will be found equally fit to reach conviction to thoſe who boaſt the ſuperior advantage of the Chriſtian revelation. For it is no new nor groundleſs obſervation, that Paul, in his epiſtle to the Roman church, wrote as foreſeeing, that men wearing the Chriſtian name would corrupt the Chriſtian doctrine, as much as either Jews or Heathens corrupted the ſeveral intimations of the mind of God given to them; yea he expreſsly propheſies as much in his ſecond epiſtle to Timothy, chap. iii.

5. The apoſtle, with propriety, begins his charge, by taking notice of the leſſon exhibited to all nations by the viſible works of God: for whatever ſuperior inſtruction was given to Jews or Chriſtians, they were ſtill chargeable with guilt for every neglect of the common leſſon taught by the frame of nature. Moreover, the ſuperior knowledge whereof they boaſted, furniſhed Paul with arguments *a fortiori* for their conviction; becauſe the written inſtruction given to them was far more full and explicit than what was ſuggeſted to the mere Heathens by the viſible works of God.

6. Paul introduces himſelf with a majeſty ſuitable to the greatneſs of his ſubject, while he gives the reaſon

why he is not aſhamed of the goſpel, even becauſe it is the power of God to ſave both Jews and Greeks. Then he gives the reaſon why the goſpel is powerful to ſave; to wit, becauſe it reveals a divine righteouſneſs for the help of guilty men. *For therein* (ſays he) *is the righteouſneſs of God revealed from faith to faith.* This he confirms to the Jews, who had the cleareſt diſcovery of, and higheſt pretenſions to, righteouſneſs, by quoting their own ſcriptures, *The juſt ſhall live by faith.* Then he extends his argument with a more general aſpect toward all ſorts of men. To apprehend the force of which, we muſt reflect, 1. That it could not be manifeſt that a righteouſneſs was revealed for the help of men, or that God was juſt in juſtifying the guilty, unleſs it not only appeared, that the divine law was magnified and honoured by the perfect ſubmiſſion and obedience of a perſon worthy to obey for many, but alſo that the divine diſpleaſure againſt all manner of ſin was fully expreſſed in the puniſhment of one worthy to ſuffer for many. 2. The neceſſity and excellency of the revealed righteouſneſs could not appear to mankind, unleſs men were not only found guilty by ſome divine law already ſufficiently notified to them, but alſo aſſured by demonſtrative proof, that the divine law would inevitably take effect in the puniſhment of the tranſgreſſors, notwithſtanding all the evaſive pleas by which they harden one another in ſin. ——Now, the death of Chriſt, exhibiting a new diſcovery of God from heaven, is pregnant with every argument and proof proper to attend the revelation of the divine righteouſneſs. Accordingly, Paul, having commended the goſpel, as powerful to ſave, by the divine righteouſneſs which it reveals, illuſtrates and inforces what he had ſaid, by the following argument: *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men, who hold* [or *detain*] *the truth in unrighteouſneſs.*

7. Then he proceeds to evince the ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of the Gentiles, who held the truth in unrighteouſneſs, by this argument: — *Becauſe that which may be known of God, is manifeſt in them; for God hath ſhewed it unto them.* If any one, diſpoſed to contradict,

dict, ſhall ſay, it was not God that ſhewed them this manifeſtation, but the retailers and inventors of tradition, in their fables of the amours and genealogies of the gods; I will not pretend to anſwer him; but I muſt be allowed to ſatisfy myſelf, by repeating the apoſtle's words, *For God hath ſhewed it unto them.* If another, with an air of more reſpect to the ſcripture, ſhall ſay, that God ſhewed it to them, becauſe he ſhewed it to their forefathers Adam and Noah; I muſt declare myſelf inſenſible of the force of ſuch reaſoning, unleſs ſome authentic conveyance, like that which preſerved the law of Moſes, could be pointed out. For I cannot ſee how the Gentiles in Paul's time could be convinced of ſin, for forgetting what was ſaid to Adam and Noah, if it was never fairly told them, but inſtead thereof a parcel of the moſt abſurd lies.—— If it was only by tradition that God ſhewed himſelf to the Gentiles, then we ſhould expect to find ſome account of that tradition in the next verſe, which is evidently intended as an illuſtration and proof of what was ſaid in the verſe laſt quoted. But there Paul, without giving the leaſt hint of any ſuch thing, refers to another kind of evidence altogether. His words are, *For the inviſible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; ſo that they are without excuſe: becauſe that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God,* &c. But here I am ſtopt ſhort by our forementioned author, who maintains, that the apoſtle in this paſſage is not at all ſpeaking of the Gentiles of his own time, but of ſome corrupt generations extinct many ages before; and that the Gentiles of his own time, mentioned chap. ii. 14. were believers, and did the things contained in the law. I ſhall here quote a remarkable paragraph from that writer. "From the revolt at Babel, downwards, while "men knew the true Elahim, and that the material a-"gents were the ſervants of heaven, and not objects of "worſhip, yet worſhipped them, ſet forth at large, Ro-"mans, firſt chap. at verſe 20. as above, *When they* "*knew God,* &c. the Elahim ordered them to be de-"ſtroyed; when their poſterity became ignorant, by

"and

" and after the confuſion of tongues, they became ob-
" jects of mercy, and had ſufficient means and motives
" to leave attributing the powers to thoſe agents, and
" pay them to the true Elahim; and, conſequently, to
" leave off committing thoſe breaches of duty in ſocie-
" ty, which this had drawn them into; and then per-
" forming thoſe natural duties would be acceptable from
" them, as the ſcriptures declare." I need not ſtay here to remark on this paragraph; you have ſeen enough of my mind to perceive that it muſt appear exceptionable to me in more reſpects than one.——I think it not quite foreign to the purpoſe to take notice here, that Mr Locke, notwithſtanding his zeal againſt innate ideas, and his being impoſed upon by inattentive or haſty travellers, hath yet dealt diſcreetly with the laſt quoted words of Paul, as well as with ſeveral following verſes *. He has, in my view, given Paul's ſenſe in a plain, eaſy manner. Therefore I am diſpoſed to refer to him at preſent, as ſeeing no occaſion to enlarge further on that paſſage, till I ſee what he has ſaid fairly overthrown.——I have ſaid, Mr Locke was impoſed upon by travellers, becauſe I find later travellers cenſuring the haſte and inattention of their predeceſſors, particularly in regard to their reports about religion.

* " And 'tis no more than need, that the goſpel, wherein the righteouſneſs of God by faith in Jeſus Chriſt is revealed, ſhould be preached to you Gentiles; ſince the wrath of God is now revealed from heaven by Jeſus Chriſt, againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men, who live not up to the light that God has given them. Becauſe God, in a clear manifeſtation of himſelf amongſt them, has laid before them, ever ſince the creation of the world, his divine nature and eternal power; ſo that what is to be known of his inviſible being, might be clearly diſcovered and underſtood from the viſible beauty, order and operations obſervable in the conſtitution and parts of the univerſe, by all thoſe that would caſt their regards, and apply their minds that way; inſomuch that they are utterly without excuſe: for that when the Deity was ſo plainly diſcovered to them, yet they glorified him not as was ſuitable to the excellency of his divine nature, nor did they with due thankfulneſs acknowledge him as the author of their being, and the giver of all the good they enjoyed; but, following the vain fancies of their own vain minds, ſet up to themſelves fictitious no-gods, and their fooliſh underſtandings were darkened. - - - Who ſo much debaſed themſelves, as to change the true God, who made them, for a lie of their own making, worſhipping and ſerving the creature, and things even of a lower rank than themſelves, more than the Creator, who is God over all, bleſſed for evermore. Amen."
*Locke's Paraphraſe.*

8. It

8. It can avail nothing towards invalidating either Paul's words or Locke's paraphraſe, to recount the many abſurd notions of Heathens concerning the number or quality of their deities: for nothing more abſurd has been either thought or done by them in regard to religion, than has been done by thoſe who boaſt the ſuperior advantages of the Jewiſh and Chriſtian revelations. Yet the Jewiſh prophets and the Chriſtian apoſtles are a ſtanding evidence againſt all who hear and neglect their writings; and ſo is the book of nature againſt all Pagan idolaters. We are ſo made, that every machine or contrivance immediately ſuggeſts to us an artiſt or contriver. And the great frame of nature ſufficiently evinces its author, to convince of ſin all men who worſhip and ſerve what is made, not to ſay what they themſelves make, more than the ſovereign Almighty Maker. Moreover, the daily bleſſings of providence are ſufficient to convince the nations of ingratitude. Men have indeed in all ages, not liking to retain God in their knowledge, laboured to obſcure and deface the diſcovery of God held forth in the book of nature, by inventing manifold evil cuſtoms and lying traditions: but at the ſame time, while we ſurvey this fact, it may well be inquired, what part of the moſt explicit written revelation, even where moſt ſtrongly ſupported by the voice of nature, have not Jews and Chriſtians rendered of none effect by their cuſtoms and traditions? But all the devices by which the Jews, Chriſtians, and Pagans, have ſtudied to blind and harden one another in their ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs, will avail them nothing before him, who will judge the world in righteouſneſs, according to the ſeveral intimations he gave them of his being and will.——It would require a long diſcuſſion to extend the compariſon between theſe three great diviſions of mankind; but what has been ſaid may ſuffice to hint my view of this ſubject.

9. Let us now turn our eyes to the other noted paſſage in Romans, chap. ii. Paul, ſpeaking of the righteous judgment of God, who, he declares, will render to every man according to his deeds,—to the Jew firſt, and alſo to the Gentile, adds, *For there is no reſpect of perſons with God.* A common reader, I apprehend, would readily

readily think that Paul is here ſpeaking of Jews and Gentiles in the moſt general and unlimited manner: and I muſt own it is very difficult to think otherwiſe.—— Then he proceeds to declare by what rule or law God will judge theſe two great diviſions of men at the laſt day. *For as many as have ſinned without law, ſhall alſo periſh without law; and as many as have ſinned in the law, ſhall be judged by the law,—in the day when God ſhall judge the ſecrets of men by Jeſus Chriſt, according to my goſpel.* Incloſed in the boſom of this ſentence, which affirms the final judgment of God againſt tranſgreſſors without reſpect of perſons, ſtands the controverted paſſage about the Gentiles. Before we conſider that paſſage, then, it will be proper firſt to obſerve and aſcertain the meaning of the incloſing ſentence. There can be no diſpute, I think, about Paul's latter affirmation, *that as many as have ſinned in the law, ſhall be judged by the law.* I ſuppoſe it will be allowed that Paul here ſpeaks of the law of Moſes, and thoſe who were under it, even the Jews. But a queſtion will ariſe concerning the foregoing affirmation, How ſhall thoſe who have ſinned without law, alſo periſh without law? Yea, the queſtion here is twofold. 1. How are men ſaid to ſin who have no law to find them guilty, conſidering alſo that *No law, no tranſgreſſion*, is a plain ſcripture-maxim? 2. How ſhall men periſh, or be condemned without law? Will the righteous judge of all the earth condemn any man illegally or unjuſtly? Far hence be ſuch a thought! We muſt conclude, then, that when the apoſtle ſpeaks of men ſinning and periſhing without law, he muſt mean *without* the law as delivered by Moſes to the Jews, and yet *within* the law as delivered ſome other way to the Gentiles. For it is in ſubſtance the ſame divine law by which ſinners, either of Jews or Gentiles, ſhall be found guilty at the laſt day, though delivered to the former with many advantages unknown to the latter.

10. The apoſtle having, in the ſtrongeſt manner, inſinuated, that ſinners, who have not the law as given by Moſes, muſt be condemned by the law as given them ſome other way, proceeds in the parentheſis to point out that other way; and at the ſame time to ſhew, that Jewiſh

Jewiſh tranſgreſſors could not, by virtue of their peculiar privileges, have any advantage, in the day of judgment, above ſinners of the Gentiles. The parentheſis, as connected with the foregoing words, may, I think, be paraphraſed thus. " When God judges the world, he " will have no reſpect to the perſons of men, however " diſtinguiſhed or privileged at preſent. For all tranſ- " greſſors of the divine law, whether Jews or Gentiles, " ſhall at laſt be found guilty by that law, in whatever " manner it was notified to them. For it will be no in- " demnifying plea to the Jewiſh ſinner, that he has had " the advantage of hearing the law given by Moſes in " the moſt explicit and advantageous form; that he has " frequently attended the reading of it with great zeal " and ſeriouſneſs; that he has had thereby many good " impreſſions made on his heart; that he has thereby " been enabled to diſcourſe in a far more excellent " manner than others about the character and will of " God, and ſo become confident that he was fit to be a " guide of the blind, a light of them which are in dark- " neſs, an inſtructor of the fooliſh, a teacher of babes, " *&c.*; for nothing leſs than perfect practical confor- " mity to the divine law can avail a man to juſtification " at the day of judgment. For if ye who are Jews " imagine it will commend you to God, that ye have " the knowledge of his law, are poſſeſſed of fine ſenti- " ments, and capable to reprove ſin on all occaſions; " it will be found, that even the Gentiles, whom ye " confidently conſider as unrighteous, and enemies to " God, are ſo far from being deficient in reſpect of " that knowledge, and thoſe fine ſentiments, that they " are even capable of reproving your diſobedience. " Yea, they have had ſuch occaſion for this, that they " have been led to reproach your religion, on account " of your practice, as your own prophets teſtify. For " though the Gentiles have not the law in the ſame form " as delivered to you, yet they do by nature (φυσει τα του " νομου ποιη) act the part of the law: ſo that though they " have not the law of Moſes, they are, nevertheleſs, in " effect a law unto themſelves. For, obſerve them on- " ly when they reproach each others vices, or, on the

" other hand, when they uſe exculpatory defences to " ward off reproach, and you will plainly perceive, that " they ſhew the work of the law written in their hearts, " even the ſame operation that the law of Moſes per- " forms in the hearts of you that are Jews, while " their conſcience bears joint witneſs to the equity of " the law, and their mutual reaſonings (μεταξυ αλληλων) al- " ternately accuſe and apologize."

11. From what has been ſaid, I hope it will appear, that though neither Jews nor Gentiles kept the law, yet both had ſufficient knowledge of law to perceive one another to be ſinners; and ſo were fitted to be witneſſes againſt each other at the day of judgment. The more attentively we conſider Paul's words, from the beginning of his diſcourſe on this ſubject, the greater propriety ſhall we find in the ſolemn concluſion he draws from his reaſoning in the firſt chapter, and by which he introduces his account of the laſt judgment. *Therefore thou art inexcuſable, O man, whoſoever thou art, that judgeſt: for wherein thou judgeſt another, thou condemneſt thyſelf; for thou that judgeſt, doſt the ſame things.* —— *And thinkeſt thou this, O man, that judgeſt them which do ſuch things, and doſt the ſame, that thou ſhalt eſcape the judgment of God?* Here is a home-appeal to the conſcience of every man, to which no evaſive reply can be found. Every man who cenſures his neighbour, thereby eſtabliſhes a law for his own trial. And whatever exceptions any man may make in favour of his own dear ſelf, to exempt him from doing to others what he thinks due from others to himſelf; yet all ſuch exceptive reaſonings will be repelled by the righteous Judge, who ſtands in need of no man's ſervice, whoſe judgment will be according to truth, and without reſpect of perſons. *Out of thine own mouth I condemn thee,* will be the ſilencing and convincing preamble tothe laſt ſentence pronounced on every tranſgreſſor.

12. The more effectually to ſet Jews and Gentiles on a level, with regard to the laſt judgment, Paul declares, that the Jews could receive no benefit by circumciſion, which includes all their other peculiar advantages and privileges, unleſs they kept the law; adding, that if the uncircumciſion,

uncircumciſion, the Pagans, kept the righteouſneſs of the law, they ſhould be counted the circumciſion, and accordingly enjoy all the benefits which the Jews expected in virtue of their peculiar privileges; and that they ſhould become the judges of the Jews. Could we find a man, either Jew or Gentile, who never came ſhort of the rule by which he judges others, then we might ſay, Here is a perfect man. Such a perſon might ſtand forth, and claim his juſtification, without fear of diſappointment. —— I have frequently ſmiled at Mr Locke's inſiſting, in his *Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity*, on the great neceſſity and advantage to the world of the Meſſiah's coming — to give and inforce more law. For whatever mankind were deficient in, they were far from being deficient in that reſpect. Men had every where, in all ages, by far too much law and too little righteouſneſs, by far much more of the one, and much leſs of the other, than ſuited their real happineſs. The principle of condemnation every where abounded; but the principle of righteouſneſs was every where deficient. And that defect is ſo far from being cured by the addition of more law, that it always becomes the more ſenſibly manifeſt by means of every ſuch addition. —— I apprehend, then, it is not the buſineſs of believers, to ſtrive with their neighbours about what is law or what not, or whence they got what law they have; but rather, taking mankind as they find them, to commend to their attention the amiable doctrine of mercy and forgiveneſs; ſince every man's conſcience knows law enough to ſhew that he is a ſinner, and that's enough to make him a proper object of mercy.

Having now given what I take to be the genuine ſenſe of Paul, as to the Gentiles being a law to themſelves, I would willingly ſave myſelf the trouble of illuſtrating and ſupporting that ſenſe, by expoſing the reaſonings that have been uſed to overthrow it. I cannot expoſe thoſe reaſonings as they deſerve, without ſome ſatirical reflections. Yet if I ſhould quite overlook and neglect them, it might be imputed to ſupercilious contempt. —— Without further ceremony, then, I proceed.

1. Many writers and others, inſiſting on the ſupple-

ment *contained in*, which our tranſlators, through ſome inattention, have prefixed to Paul's mention of *the law*, have greatly imbarraſſed themſelves, while they laboured to ſhew in what ſenſe the Gentiles obeyed or fulfilled the law. I have no occaſion here to plead the concurrence of that eminent linguiſt and critic, Bochart, to ſupport the ſenſe I have given of Paul's words, nor to call in the aid of the Greek fathers. The whole ſtyle and ſcope of the New Teſtament keeps me in countenance. Throughout the many places where doing and keeping the law is ſpoke of, nothing like the Greek phraſe τα του νομου is to be found. But I need not go further than the paſſage in queſtion. For, that by that phraſe muſt be underſtood the part, office, work, or operation of the law, is evident from Paul's illuſtration of his own words: for he immediately adds, in the next verſe, that the Gentiles ſhew the work of the law written in their hearts.

2. But the writer of a late diſſertation upon the ſuppoſed exiſtence of a moral law of nature, *&c.* has ſtarted a thought, which, ſo far as I can learn, never occurred to any body before; to wit, that by *Gentiles*, in this paſſage, the apoſtle does by no means mean the *Heathen*, as has hitherto been imagined, but *Chriſtians*; and that accordingly he intends to affirm, that Chriſtians fulfill the law, or do the things contained in it. Now, let this be admitted for a moment, and let us try how Paul's ſenſe will cohere. I need not here inquire, With what juſtice ſhall thoſe be condemned who are declared obedient to the law? Nor ſhall I inſiſt on the abſurdity of ſuppoſing Paul to have quite forgot his ſubject, by unſeaſonably introducing a compariſon between Jews and Chriſtians. I ſhall confine myſelf to the parentheſis in queſtion. Paul, then, muſt be underſtood to ſay, That it would avail the Jews nothing before God, that they were hearers of the law, while they were not doers of it; becauſe only the doers ſhall be juſtified: But Chriſtians are doers of the law; therefore — they ſhall be juſtified. They are ſaid, indeed, according to the Diſſertation, to become doers of the law by faith and love. But, at any rate, if Paul's words are allowed to have any coherence,

coherence, their juſtification muſt come by the deeds of the law, or by their doing the things contained in it. In a word, their righteouſneſs is of the law. —— But this is not all; we muſt likewiſe put ſome ſenſe on the latter part of the parentheſis; and Paul muſt be underſtood to ſay, "Chriſtians are obedient to the law, their "conſcience alſo bearing witneſs, and their thoughts "the mean while accuſing or elſe excuſing one an-"other." Here one cannot help thinking it ſomewhat ſtrange, to find Chriſtians giving obedience to the law, and ſhewing the faith and love written in their hearts, their conſcience alſo bearing witneſs to their integrity; and yet, in the very mean while, employed in accuſing one another, recriminating, or making exculpatory defences. —— But perhaps it will be ſaid, that the apoſtle is not here ſpeaking of obedient Chriſtians quarrelling with one another without a cauſe; but that he is deſcribing the inward ſtate of every particular Chriſtian's thoughts, at the time he is ſhewing his faith and love, obeying the law, and his conſcience bearing witneſs that he is doing his duty, to wit, that his inward thoughts are the mean while employed in accuſing or elſe excuſing one another. This employment of the inward thoughts would appear to me more ſuitable to the ſtate of a man's mind, juſt before, at, or after the commiſſion of ſome notable crime. But, for my part, I leave every one to judge as he pleaſes.

3. The denying the Heathen to be a law to themſelves, naturally introduces or proceeds from ſentiments diſhonourable to the divine juſtice and mercy. 1. As to the firſt of theſe, the forementioned writer, in his Eſſay on inſpiration, *p.* 152. having given directions to the unlearned in Chriſtian countries, by obſerving which, it is preſumed, they will be directed, no doubt, to the refuge, proceeds to conſider the caſe of the Heathen. "But what ſhall the Heathen do? Since we are not "to be their judge, we have no buſineſs to judge about "them, but leave them to him who has promiſed "(Iſ. liv.) bleſſings to them beyond our preſent com-"prehenſion." Iſaiah, in that chapter, evidently ſpeaks of the church redeemed out of all nations: and in

verſ.

verſ. 13. we have a very good ſummary of the whole chapter: *And all thy children ſhall be taught of the Lord, and great ſhall be the peace of thy children.* This Chriſt refers to and explains, John vi. 45. where he ſays, *It is written in the prophets, And they ſhall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.* Hence it is evident, that the prophet ſpeaks only of Chriſtians. The queſtion then ſtill remains entire, What muſt the Heathen do, who are not Chriſtians? Have we no buſineſs to judge about them, becauſe none of us can pretend to be the ſovereign judge? Dare we not agree with the voice of the judge in ſaying they are ſinners? Dare we not affirm, That the Lord will come in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, as well as them that obey not the goſpel? Or, Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? Far be it! For then, how ſhall God judge the world? Beſides, if it be once granted to Deiſts, that any Heathen man *may* eſcape the wrath to come, otherwiſe than by the knowledge of Chriſt, I apprehend that all reaſoning with them about the neceſſity and advantage of the goſpel muſt be but ſolemn trifling. 2. Let us next obſerve, how the ſcripture-account of divine mercy is affected by our author's doctrine. If the Heathen were not ſinners before they heard of the goſpel, if they were not dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, and by nature children of wrath, we can have no notion of the meaning and majeſty of Paul's words, — *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in ſins, hath quickened us together with Chriſt, &c.* —— We are well warranted to ſay, that God ſent not his ſon to condemn the world, for there was already abundance of law every where to anſwer that purpoſe; but God ſent his ſon, that the world through him might be ſaved. All that the world needed, was the knowledge of ſalvation by the remiſſion of their ſins. But, according to our author, this only comes in among a croud of other eminent advantages, more gratifying to the pride of the wiſe man. Diſſertation, *p.* 15. "I have "proved elſewhere, that the ſcriptures were given, and

"are

" are able to make men wiſe in politics, in philoſophy, " phyſics, *&c.* and to eternal ſalvation." Paul, in commending the ſcriptures to a Chriſtian biſhop, or rather a teacher of biſhops, forgot all but the laſt of theſe advantages. Beſides, if, according to our author's ſcheme, the Heathen have no law to find them guilty, it is evident, that, by the publication of the goſpel, condemnation muſt be propagated much more than ſalvation. This I ſay muſt be the caſe, if men cannot be found guilty but by the neglect of revelation. And thus, upon the whole, the divine revelation would be rather a ſending of condemnation than of deliverance to men. For the more clearly that revelation, as to its leading ſcope, is held forth, the great bulk of mankind have always ſhewn the greater averſion to it; even while they have been diligently employed in extracting ſuch politics from it as have led them to deſtroy one another before the time of God's righteous judgment. And I may add, that even our ſcripture-philoſophers have ſhewn themſelves more ignorant of the goſpel than our homelieſt popular preachers. —— But not to digreſs, our author has ſufficiently hinted his notion of divine mercy in a fore-cited paragraph. Having made mention of an ancient generation of men, who, for ſinning againſt the knowledge they received, were ordered to be deſtroyed, he next acquaints us, that their poſterity, by becoming ignorant, that is, either by loſing or not obtaining the knowledge by which their predeceſſors were found guilty, became objects of mercy. Here I would remark, 1. That if they never obtained that knowledge, they could not become objects of mercy; for juſtice itſelf required, that they ſhould be exempted from puniſhment as not guilty. 2. If they did obtain it, but loſt it through their averſion to it, they ſeem to be no leſs guilty than their anceſtors, who, notwithſtanding their ſins, ſtill preſerved the law that found them ſinners. 3. But perhaps, by ſtriking a medium, it will be ſaid, that having only obtained a ſmall part of their fathers knowledge, their guilt in neglecting or loſing it was proportionally ſmall; and accordingly they became objects of mercy. In this view of things, we are led to conclude,

clude, that only petty offenders are proper objects of divine mercy, while juſtice muſt take place againſt great ſinners. 4. But what is the mercy ſhewn to the petty offenders? Why, they get more law; they get ſufficient means and motives to forſake their ſins. The conſequence is, if they make a good uſe of theſe, it is well; if not, they are full as guilty as their anceſtors. Thus we are led to think of divine mercy, in its whole progreſs, as meaſured out to men according to their behaviour, the ſmallneſs of their guilt, and the goodneſs of their diſpoſitions; which kind of reaſoning, in the eyes of thoſe who have no better ſkill than they learn from the apoſtles, looks much liker the diſtribution of juſtice than of mercy.

4. If it be neceſſary that I ſhould take any notice of our author's peculiar criticiſm, by which he inclines to ſeparate the expreſſion, *by nature*, from the ſecond, in order to conſtrue it with the firſt clauſe of ver. 14 Rom. ii. I ſhall only ſay, that he is very welcome for me to conſtrue it any way he pleaſes, provided he make any tolerable ſenſe of the paſſage, and do not, to uſe his own words, play the ſcripture upon itſelf.

5. Our author almoſt every where confounds the notion of law with the principle of righteouſneſs, or the knowledge of our duty with the inclination to comply with it. Thus he is led into a way of reaſoning very different from that of the apoſtles. They inferred even from the worſt actions of men, and their reaſonings upon them, that they had a law againſt which they were ſinners in thoſe actions, ſo obnoxious to the judgment of God; whereas he, from the licentious or lawleſs actions of men, infers they have no law. The plain conſequence is, they cannot be convicted of ſin, ſo are not accountable to God for ſuch actions.——I apprehend we have no occaſion to travel abroad among foreign nations to bring home a liſt of the impious ſentiments and wicked actions of men. We can ſee mankind ſufficiently in our own iſland; we can ſee them either in the politeſt or in the rudeſt form, even in the ſame city. Now, I reckon that, in queſt of a law of nature, you have no occaſion to go farther than the watermen on the Thames,

Thames, nor I than the fiſh and fruit women about Edinburgh. It will be allowed that neither of theſe are greatly indebted to education; yet if we obſerve, with what animoſity they exchange the terms, *whore*, *thief*, *liar*, &c. we will ſee the work of the law written on their hearts in a very ſenſible and ſtriking manner. And even while we behold them at greateſt variance about who is in the wrong, we ſhall perceive their conſciences on both ſides perfectly agreed about what is wrong. —— Our own iſland daily affords many inſtances of the moſt ſhocking inhumanity. The remaining effects of thoſe who are expelled their houſes by fire, are frequently plundered by their inhuman neighbours. The inhabitants of ſome parts of our coaſts, we are told, lie in wait for ſhipwrecks, and inſtead of aiding, conſpire to ruin the unhappy ſufferers, in order to enrich themſelves; yet if any of theſe inhuman people was to be injured in a trifle by his aſſociate, we ſhould ſoon ſee him diſcover, in a very lively manner, an acute ſenſe of right and wrong.—— I ſhall cloſe this ſubject with a ſimilitude drawn from an obvious fact reſpecting human law. If a ſtranger, obſerving how much ſmuggling abounded in Britain, ſhould infer that either we had no laws aſcertaining the revenue on trade, or that the ſmugglers were ignorant of thoſe laws, it will be allowed he would make a very wrong inference; and that he would have more reaſon to conclude that they were better ſkilled than their neighbours in thoſe laws; it being manifeſt, that not ignorance, but the love of gain, makes them tranſgreſs, ſince their knowledge of the law appears in their very manner of tranſgreſſing. But if a poor unfortunate ſmuggler ſhould, by the King's favour, be made an officer of the revenue, we would quickly ſee him zealous for the laws he formerly ſought to evade. The reaſon is obvious; his intereſt now lies on the ſide of his duty. The application is eaſy. The ſcripture ſpeaking of the natural diſpoſition of depraved man's heart, ſays, *it is enmity againſt God*; *for it is not ſubject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.* But Paul, who found mercy, could ſay, *I delight in the law of God after the inward man.* He found his duty, his real in-

tereſt; his higheſt pleaſure and happineſs coinciding. And this coincidence can never take place, but by divine mercy preventing the will of man. The cleareſt and beſt inforced inſtructions about our duty, can never produce it, but will always rather ſerve to awaken and ſtimulate the forementioned enmity.

I have now delivered my thoughts concerning the law of nature, and our author's reaſonings againſt it. But it would require a much longer letter to ſhew in how many reſpects his doctrine and correſponding ſpirit appear exceptionable to me. In the general, if I ſhould hearken to it, I would be obliged to alter greatly my notions of the divine law,—of the righteouſneſs which honoured it,—of Paul's reaſonings about what is of the law, and what is of faith,—of the character of a Chriſtian, *&c.*

## LETTER III.

DEUTEROS to his friend A. B.

*Oct.* 29. 1758.

——— As to the ſenſe of that paſſage [*viz.* Rom. i. 20.], you deſire my mind of: To me it contains theſe propoſitions. 1. That the eternal power and godhead of God are inviſible from the creation of the world; that is, as I underſtand it, from looking upon the creation, without any other information given the mind. 2. That his eternal power and godhead are nevertheleſs clearly manifeſted among men. 3. That the way by which they are manifeſted, is by intelligible ποιηματα works he has done. Theſe works of his which manifeſt God, are the applying the creation to the expreſſing of the revealed knowledge of himſelf. 1. By figures; 2. By a language ſuited to theſe figures, and the analogy or ſimilitude between material and ſpiritual truths. I have two proofs of this ſenſe from the paſſage, and, while they bear evidence, will never ſeek more. 1. The apoſtaſy deſcribed is conſiſtent, as the apoſtle aſſerts it was, with the improvement of human wiſdom upon divine truth. It was conſiſtent with human wiſdom,

dom, to eſſay the improvement of divine figures, by additions and variations, which would naturally degenerate into idolatry; whereas it is conſiſtent with no poſſible tranſition, agreeable to the exerciſe of rational powers, far leſs wiſdom, to degenerate from a rational diſcovery of God's being the inviſible creator, unto the ſuppoſition that he needed a houſe, food, ſacrifices, or that there was any reſemblance for him among his creatures. Yet all this they were led into by the exerciſe of human wiſdom. 2. The terms, *eternal power and godhead*, include, and are there intended to include all that creatures can know of God. Did creatures know the eternal power of God, and not know his eternal power unto ſalvation as well as creation? Did they know his Godhead, and not know that there are Three, and theſe Three are one? Or could they be ſaid to know the Godhead, and not know that? In ſhort, God revealed the whole truth of himſelf unto all the world, and they changed his truth into a lie, by worſhipping the creature; which they could never fall into from the dictates of natural knowledge, if ſuch a thing there were, further than by preferring the enjoyment of viſible to inviſible things. But allowing their [the objectors] ſenſe of that text, it at the ſame time deſtroys their ſenſe of conſcience. We have often heard it ſaid, Conſcience gives us the knowledge of God, and that it was reaſon which led us away from it; that is, according to any idea I could form of its meaning, there is in the mind a natural impreſſion of God, good and evil, called *conſcience*; but whenever we come to reaſon, or uſe deduction, which is vain philoſophy, it led us away from that knowledge, or perverted it! But now, if the contemplating of the creation be a medium of that knowledge, and if we muſt reaſon from effect to cauſe, then we come at the knowledge of God by reaſon or philoſophy, and not by the light of conſcience. Who now are the patrons of human philoſophy? --- *In another place of the ſame letter,* Why do they meddle with philoſophical points, when they are ſo great enemies to it [philoſophy] on ſcripture ſubjects? - - -

## LETTER IV.

### JUNIUS to PROTOS.

[Having quoted the preceding.]

*Dec.* 28. 1758.

——— Here you have a new proof, agreeable to what I ſignified in my letter of October 5. of the ſtrange ſhifts to which ſome late reaſoners againſt the law of nature are reduced, in order to preſs Paul into their ſervice, or rather to invalidate his evidence againſt them. As to our author's ſenſe of Paul's words, I know not what reception you will think it worthy of; however, as it is calculated as much to ſupport your ſcheme as it aims to overthrow mine, I am willing to try the weight of it for a little. As our author has not diſputed the commonly admitted connection of the 18th, 19th, and 20th verſes, we muſt ſuppoſe he allows it, till he ſays otherwiſe; I mean, that he allows Paul is in this paſſage proving all men to be ſinners; ſo to need that goſpel which he was commiſſioned to preach to all nations, even that goſpel which he calls *the power of God to ſalvation.* Here then we are ſtopt ſhort at the entry, by a very natural queſtion, Why does Paul, in ſo many places of his epiſtles, make ſuch a marvel of the glad tidings he brought the nations, as of a diſcovery entirely new to them, if, according to our author, God's eternal power unto ſalvation was already clearly manifeſted among them before he came? And why did he not take the like advantage in perſuading the Gentiles, as in his addreſſes unto the Jews, in whoſe preſence he maintained, he ſaid none other things than thoſe which the prophets and Moſes did ſay ſhould come? What hindred him from appealing in like manner to the clear manifeſtation of ſaving power among the Gentiles? Yea, this advantage ſeems to have been greateſt here; for the law given to the Jews exhibited only a ſhadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things; ſo came ſhort of a clear manifeſtation. Again, muſt we ſay, that none are ſinners, none obnoxious to the judgment of God, but thoſe who have oppoſed or corrupted

corrupted the diſcovery of his ſaving power? If this be ſaid, then the goſpel, the grand exhibition of grace to the guilty, is much more fruitful in ſpreading condemnation than deliverance among men.——But I have ſufficiently urged this point in my former.

To proceed: I ſuppoſe you will eaſily perceive, that our author's commentary on Paul's words bears all the marks of diſtreſs in the commentator, and of violence to the text. Say yourſelf, whether ought we to ſmile or be provoked at his ſtrange and forced conſtruction of the Greek word ποιηματα, by which Paul, the Septuagint, and, I may add, all their readers till now, have underſtood works, as diſtinguiſhed from words? Our author, ſenſible of the pinch here, yet determined at any rate to go through, has found it neceſſary to do the ſame violence to the Engliſh word *works*, as to the Greek one for which it ſtands. So, by a very uncommon liberty of criticiſm, though not quite ſtrange to ſome late critics, he reſolutely uſes the expreſſion *works* inſtead of *words*, as if he intended to work us out of all meaning in the uſe of words. For you know neither figures nor letters import any thing, eſpecially about things inviſible, but as they ſignify ſo many intelligible ſounds or words; and words, however figured, written, ſounded, or ſignified, are ſtill words. When I behold the thiſtle in the Scotch arms, I ſee, by the motto, that it anſwers to ſo many words, which tell why it ſtands there. Without a motto either expreſſed or implied by common uſe, a cabbage might ſtand there as well as a thiſtle.——With the ſame freedom of criticiſm he might proceed to ſay, That not the hearers of the law are juſt before God, but ποιηται, the tranſcribers, readers, chanters, or verſifiers of the law, ſhall be juſtified. Or even retaining the Engliſh word *doers*, it might ſtill be ſaid, that all theſe are employed in doing ſome intelligible buſineſs about the law. In a word, by this method of criticiſm, one may make any thing he pleaſes of almoſt any text whatever.

But, admitting our author's criticiſm for a little, let us try where it leads us. Muſt we ſay, then, that the Gentiles, who had among them no ſuch diſcovery directly from the heavens and the earth of an inviſible almighty maker,

maker, as was ſufficient to convince them of ſin for their ingratitude, idolatry, *&c.* had nevertheleſs among them a manifeſtation of the goſpel, or, which is the ſame thing, the power of God unto ſalvation, by means of a clear and explicit revelation? If ſo, what ſhall we make of the many paſſages deſcribing the darkneſs that covered the earth when the apoſtolic goſpel viſited the nations? Moreover, muſt we ſay, that men are not convincible of ſin, but by their neglect of the revelation of divine mercy? and muſt we ſay, at the ſame time, that mercy is revealed only for the relief of ſinners? Why ſhould men be condemned for neglecting mercy, who are not ſinners previous to or aſide from the exhibition of it, ſo do not ſtand in need of it, when it is firſt intimated to them? None but the guilty need forgiveneſs: the whole need not the phyſician.——Is there no entrance for ſin into the world, but by means of that goſpel which brings deliverance from it? If ſo, what ſhall we make of the grand contraſt betwixt law on the one hand, and faith, grace, and mercy, on the other, which is ſo much inſiſted on throughout the New Teſtament?——Or is there no other law but what Paul calls the law of faith? Again, how comes Paul to ſpeak of Gentiles as ſinning, and being judged without law? By what rule ſhall thoſe be judged, who are deſcribed as having no written revelation like the Jews? and why does Paul nevertheleſs ſay of ſuch, that they are a law unto themſelves? Thoſe who would give the ſenſe of Paul in one place, ſhould endeavour to make it conſiſtent with his ſenſe in another.

Further, it may be obſerved, that the apoſtles never weakened, but always inforced the authentic declarations of the mind of God they found men already poſſeſſed of. While they preached to the Jews, they eſtabliſhed the credit of their law, in oppoſition to the corruptions of it by tradition; and accordingly they made uſe of it to convince them of ſin, and ſhew their need of the goſpel. Now, if they found any authentic revelation of divine grace among the Gentiles, it might be expected that they would likewiſe ſupport the credit of that revelation, in oppoſition to all falſe gloſſes put upon it;

it; and accordingly make uſe of it, at leaſt to convince men of ſin for their neglect of it, (if indeed men could be convinced of ſin from the neglect of mercy, who were not convincible of it by any other intimation of the divine will), and ſo ſhew the need of the goſpel which they preached.

Yet it muſt be allowed, that great difficulties would have attended any attempt to convince the Gentiles of ſin from that quarter. At beſt, it would be reſting the conviction of ſin upon a very looſe, vague, and uncertain foundation. For how ſhould a proper criterion be found among them to diſtinguiſh authentic revelation, if ſuch there was, from idle fiction and fluctuating tradition? Yea, we find them noted for nothing that had any pretenſions of that kind, but what is called vanities, the courſe of this world, the vanity of their mind, the will of the Gentiles, and their vain converſation received by tradition from their fathers. And, as I wrote you before, human tradition, the great corrupter of divine laws, can never be admitted as the rule by which God will judge the actions of men at the laſt day. No law can anſwer this purpoſe, but what bears to the conſcience of man the ſtamp of being divine; and no ſins need to be forgiven but ſuch as otherwiſe would inſure condemnation at that day.

But there is another difficulty. The language ſuited to the figures, by which divine revelation is ſuppoſed to be exhibited to the Gentiles, muſt, I preſume, be underſtood to be the Hebrew language. Here the queſtion occurs, How could the Gentiles, either in Paul's time, or ours, be convinced of ſin for not retaining the Hebrew language, and the Hutchinſonian philoſophy, neither of which were ever manifeſt in them, or ſhewn to them? Yet Paul evidently intends to evince all unrighteouſneſs and ungodlineſs of men from their diſregard to what was manifeſt in them, and God ſhewed them. Our author then muſt either make it appear, that the Hebrew language, and Hutchinſonian philoſophy, were manifeſt in the Gentiles, and ſhewn them of God; or he muſt ſay, that they were not convincible of ſin, were not obnoxious to the judgment of God; ſo were not objects of mercy,

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as not being ſinners. In ſhort, to uſe our author's own words, he hath obliged himſelf to make it appear, that God revealed the whole truth of himſelf to all the world; and this he can never do, by ſhewing that Adam and Noah got a diſcovery of that whole truth.

The notion of preparing a houſe, food, ſacrifices, and things of that kind, to God, never came from the natural diſcovery of God made by his works, nor yet from human wiſdom; it came by tradition from ſupernatural revelation. This we, who have the ſcripture in our hands, can eaſily ſee.——But the notion of God's needing any thing from man, whatever dæmon firſt ſuggeſted it, is evidently a ſin againſt the natural diſcovery of God made by his works. And Paul, in his addreſs to the Athenians, Acts xvii. evidently appears to have thought ſo. Whatever handle the devil might make uſe of to lead men to idolatry, (and the more plauſible the pretence of a ſacred original, ſo much the better for his purpoſe), Paul, nevertheleſs, in the forementioned chapter, confidently maintains, that the natural diſcovery of God, exhibited by his works, ſhews, that we OUGHT NOT *to think that the Godhead is like unto gold or ſilver, or ſtone graven by art and man's device.* Men have indeed in all ages perverted the notices they have had of God and his will of every kind; and it is no new nor ill-ſupported obſervation, that men favoured with the cleareſt revelation, have not only abuſed that, but alſo corrupted themſelves even in the things they knew naturally.

As to the objectors, of whom I am one, our notion of conſcience is, I apprehend, the moſt common one, held by the reputed orthodox, by eminent philoſophers, and by the vulgar. We never maintained, that any man had a conſcience, or any natural knowledge of God and his law, excluſive of the view of his works. And yet we ſay, ſuch knowledge is obtained without philoſophy, without reaſoning about effects and cauſes. The viſible works of God and the mind of man are ſo framed and adapted to each other, that the former urge upon the latter the conviction that they are effects, or ποιηματα, *made things*. And my very knowing things to be effects, includes in it the conviction that they have a cauſe; even

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as my very ſeeing objects includes in it a conviction that the light is preſent. We are convinced the things we ſee are effects, not by any chain of reaſoning, but by intuition; and intuition is acknowledged to afford a higher degree of conviction than any chain of reaſoning: ſo there is no occaſion here for reaſoning from effect to cauſe; conviction in this caſe anticipates all reaſoning.

So foreign is philoſophic reaſoning to the natural conviction of the being of God, that logicians, ſeeking to reſt our conviction of his being on ſcientific or philoſophic arguments, have only ſerved to perplex one another about a caſe in itſelf clear, by doubts and difficulties ariſing wholly from ſome informality or defect in their arguments. And what is remarkable in this caſe is, that the chief defect they have found in each other's arguments has been a begging of the queſtion; ſo natural is it for conviction to prevent reaſoning, and ſo inſignificant is reaſoning in this caſe. Another thing remarkable is, that no ſooner do they begin to ſuppoſe the matter looſe, in order to fix it by artificial reaſoning, than their words begin to loſe all fixedneſs and propriety of meaning.—— But to keep my proper diſtance, and not meddle too rudely with philoſophy and philoſophers, I ſhall here give you a ſhort view of their reaſonings on this point, in the words of one of our lateſt philoſophers, and who is publicly thought worthy, and, for aught I know, juſtly, to ſtand in the firſt rank among them.

" Power denotes a ſimple idea, which, upon that account, cannot admit of a definition. But no perſon is or can be at a loſs about the meaning. Every action we perceive, gives us a notion of power: for a productive cauſe is implied in our perception of every action or event; and the very idea of cauſe comprehends a power of producing its effect. [Here he examines the circumſtances of contiguity and ſucceſſion in the caſe of a man throwing a ſtone]—But theſe circumſtances, which include both contiguity and ſucceſſion, make no part of the idea of power; which is conceived as an inherent property, ſubſiſting in the man, not merely when he is exerting it, but even when he is at reſt. That all men have this very idea, is a fact not to be controverted. The only

doubt is, whence it is derived, from what ſource it ſprings.

" That reaſon will not help us out, will be evident. For reaſon muſt always have ſome object to employ itſelf upon. There muſt be known *data* or principles, to lead us to the diſcovery of things which are connected with theſe *data* or principles. But with regard to power, which makes a neceſſary connection betwixt a cauſe and its effect, we have no *data* nor principles to lead us to the diſcovery. We are not acquainted with the beings and things about us, otherwiſe than by certain qualities and properties obvious to the external ſenſes. Power is none of theſe; nor is there any connection which we can diſcover betwixt power and any of theſe. In a word, we have not the leaſt foundation for concluding power in any body, till it once exert its power. If it be urged, That the effects produced are the *data*, from which we can infer a cauſe, by a proceſs of reaſoning, and conſequently a power in the cauſe to produce theſe effects; I anſwer, That when a new thing or quality is produced, when in general any change is brought about, it is extremely doubtful, whether, by any proceſs of reaſoning, we can conclude it to be an effect, ſo as neceſſarily to require a cauſe of its exiſtence. That we do conclude it to be an effect, is moſt certain; but that we can draw any ſuch concluſion, merely from reaſon, I do not ſee. What leads me, I confeſs, to this way of thinking, is, that men of the greateſt genius have been unſucceſsful, in attempting to prove, that every thing which begins to exiſt, muſt have a cauſe of its exiſtence. " Whatever is produced (ſays Locke) without any " cauſe, is produced by *nothing*; or, in other words, " has *nothing* for its cauſe. But *nothing* can never be " a cauſe, no more than it can be *ſomething*." This is obviouſly begging the queſtion. To affirm that *nothing* is the cauſe, is taking for granted that a cauſe is neceſſary; which is the very point undertaken to be made out. Dr Clarke's argument labours under the ſame defect. " Every thing (he ſays) muſt have a cauſe; for " if any thing wanted a cauſe, it would produce itſelf; " that is, exiſt before it exiſted; which is impoſſible."

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If a thing can exiſt without a cauſe, there is no neceſſity it ſhould produce itſelf; or that any thing ſhould produce it. In ſhort, there does not appear to be any contradiction in the propoſition, That a thing may begin to exiſt without a cauſe; and therefore I dare not declare the fact to be impoſſible. But ſenſe affords me a conviction, that nothing begins to exiſt without a cauſe, though reaſon cannot afford me a demonſtration of it. This matter will be opened afterwards. At preſent it is ſufficient to obſerve, that the conviction in this caſe is complete, and carries ſo much authority with it, as ſcarce to admit a bare conception that the thing can poſſibly be otherwiſe. - - - - Further, the perception we have of any object as an effect, includes in it the perception of a cauſe proportioned to the effect. - - - - It may be poſſible, for any reaſon we have to the contrary, that a blind and undeſigning cauſe may be productive of excellent effects: but our ſenſes diſcover what reaſon does not, that every object which appears beautiful, as fitted to an end or purpoſe, is the effect of a deſigning cauſe; and that every object that appears beautiful, as fitted to a good end or purpoſe, is the effect of a deſigning and benevolent cauſe. We are ſo conſtituted that we cannot entertain a doubt of this, if we would. And ſo far as we gather from experience, we are not deceived. - - - - And when at laſt we take in at one view the material and moral world, full of harmony, order, and beauty; happily adjuſted in all its parts, to anſwer great and glorious purpoſes; there is in this grand production neceſſarily involved the perception of a cauſe, unbounded in power, intelligence, and goodneſs. Thus it is that the Deity hath manifeſted himſelf to us, by the means of principles wrought into our nature, which muſt infallibly operate upon viewing objects in their relation of cauſe and effect. - - - - The Deity hath not left his exiſtence to be gathered from ſlippery and far-fetched arguments; we need but open our eyes to receive impreſſions of him, almoſt from every thing we perceive. We diſcover his being and attributes in the ſame manner that we diſcover external objects. We have the evidence of our ſenſes; and none but thoſe who are ſo ſtubbornly hypo-

thetical as to deny the exiſtence of matter, againſt the evidence of their ſenſes, can ſeriouſly and deliberately deny the exiſtence of the Deity.

" The arguments *a priori* for the exiſtence and attributes of the Deity are urged with the greateſt ſhew of reaſon, in the ſermons preached at Boyle's lectures. But the ſermons upon this ſubject, though they command my ſtricteſt attention, never gained my heart: on the contrary, they always give me ſenſible uneaſineſs; the cauſe of which I have been at a loſs to diſcover, though I imagine I can now explain it. Such deep metaphyſical reaſoning, if it afford any conviction, is ſurely not adapted to the vulgar and illiterate. Is the knowledge of God then reſerved for perſons of great ſtudy and deep thinking? is a vail thrown over the reſt of mankind? This thought always returned upon me, and gave me pain.--- At the ſame time, to found our knowledge of the Deity upon reaſoning ſolely, is not agreeable to the analogy of nature. We are not left to gather our duty by abſtract reaſoning, nor indeed by any reaſoning: it is engraved upon the table of our hearts.--- Therefore, if we can truſt to analogy, we ought to expect, that God will diſcover himſelf to us in ſome ſuch manner as may take in all mankind, the vulgar and illiterate, as well as the deep-thinking philoſopher.--- That nothing can begin to exiſt without a cauſe, is ſufficiently evident from ſenſe: but that this can be demonſtrated by any argument *a priori*, drawn from the nature of things, I have not obſerved. And if demonſtration fail us in the very outſetting, we cannot hope for its aſſiſtance in the after ſteps.---Next to it [the certainty of our own exiſtence] we have not, as it appears to me, a greater certainty of any matter of fact than of the exiſtence of the Deity. It is at leaſt equal to the certainty we have of external objects, and of the conſtancy and uniformity of the operations of nature, upon the faith of which our whole ſchemes of life are adjuſted.

" The arguments *a poſteriori*, which have been urged for the being and attributes of the Deity, are generally defective. There is always wanting one link of the chain, to wit, that peculiar principle upon which is

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founded our knowledge of cauſes and their effects. But the calm perceptions, turning habitual by frequent repetition, are apt to be overlooked in our reaſonings. Many a propoſition is rendered obſcure, by much laboured argument; for the truth of which we need but appeal to our own perceptions. Thus we are told, that the frame and order of the world, the wiſdom and goodneſs diſplayed in every part of it, are an evident demonſtration of the being of God. Theſe things, I acknowledge, afford us full conviction of his being. But, laying aſide ſenſe and perception, I ſhould be utterly at a loſs, by any ſort of reaſoning, to conclude the exiſtence of any one thing from that of any other." See *Eſſays on the principles of morality and natural religion.*

So much for the reaſoning of philoſophers. And from the writings of that claſs of men, it would ſeem, we muſt form our notions of philoſophic reaſoning. Now, if our author, laying aſide punning or playing with words, and then triumphing as if he had ſaid ſomething to the purpoſe, ſhall proceed to explain what he means by philoſophic reaſoning, then, perhaps, we ſhall be ready to tell how far it is our buſineſs to meddle with philoſophy and philoſophers, and how far we are concerned to be on our guard againſt impoſition from that quarter. - - - -

Atheiſtical writers have laboured to weaken the evidence of the Deity exhibited by his works; but, ſo far as I can learn, our author is the firſt who hath dared to introduce Paul as flatly and directly maintaining the negative againſt all who affirm, that eternal power and Godhead are viſible or manifeſted by the ſimple inſpection of thoſe works. - - - -Paul maintains, in the cleareſt manner, before the men of Lyſtra, that God had evidenced himſelf by doing good, even by giving rain from heaven, and fruitful ſeaſons, filling the hearts of men with food and gladneſs; that he thus evidenced himſelf, I ſay, to the nations, in former ages, even to the nations, who otherwiſe were left without witneſs of him, and ſuffered to walk in their own ways. So that, from his reaſoning, it plainly appears, they were not convincible of ſin from any other witneſſes or evidences of the Deity than ſuch as he mentions. But, according to our author, ſuch witneſſes could

could bear no evidence without a higher teſtimony; even while it plainly appears Paul intended to mention the higheſt they had. But why need I inſiſt on his addreſs to the men of Lyſtra? the ſame evidence ſeems conſtantly to have been in his view in his addreſſes to the idolatrous Heathen, whom at the ſame time he deſcribes as having no hope toward God, and deſtitute of the oracles which afforded that hope.——On the other hand, if it was the apoſtle's deſign to ſay, the Gentiles had among them a clear manifeſtation of ſaving power, one might have expected he would have congratulated them upon it, and bleſſed them; whereas his ſentence cloſes as if he had been ſpeaking of ſome ſlighted law or obligation;—*ſo that they are without excuſe.* Law condemns the guilty where-ever it is known or underſtood; and the goſpel, or the diſcovery of God's ſaving power, where-ever it is known, believed, or underſtood, brings ſalvation; *For it is the power of God unto ſalvation to every one that believeth.* Is the apoſtle, then, ſpeaking of ſuch diſcovery as ſhewn of God to the Gentiles, as manifeſt in them, as perceived and underſtood by them, and yet bringing no ſalvation along with it, but only ſerving the ſame purpoſe with law, to leave the guilty without excuſe? Beſides, if ſuch diſcovery was ſo corrupted and effaced by the apoſtaſy of the preceding generations, as never to reach the Gentiles in Paul's time with intelligible evidence, do not theſe plainly appear to be furniſhed with a very obvious and weighty excuſe? In a word, if the law of nature be rejected, we can ſee no coherence in the grand ſcheme of the ſcriptures, we can have no diſtinct or ſatisfactory notion of the divine grace revealed there, no juſt view either of ſin or righteouſneſs; yea, the neceſſity of revelation diſappears, and moreover a high-road is paved for downright atheiſm. But the voice of nature, however much depreſſed by corruption has hitherto defeated all the art of philoſophers. And it has likewiſe been found, that nothing but the ſupernatural diſcovery of mercy can thoroughly quiet the voice of condemnation naturally haunting the breaſt of every man.----

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## LETTER V.

### TRITOS to PROTOS.

——— The queſtion, Sir, is not, By whom, or with what views, the denial of natural, or a law diſcovered by man, was at firſt ſtarted? but ſimply, Whether we are authoriſed from ſcripture, as well as from matter of fact, to hold the negative? for as to the latter, it is clear, no man ever framed to himſelf a ſyſtem of laws, was ever the lawgiver to himſelf, king and ſubject, the obliger and the obliged, in this ſenſe. The Heathens, as you have ſeen in *Sophron*, diſclaimed the invention; and even the advocates for it have been forced, in contradiction to themſelves, to refer the riſe of it to revelation. See preface to *Sophron*. We are then to examine, whether the ſcriptures do not declare expreſsly againſt this new notion. And here we find them preciſely denying the natural man a power to diſcern the things of the Spirit of God, 1 Cor. ii. 14.; to diſcover the being of the Father, Matth. xi. 27.; to find out wiſdom, Job xxviii. *&c.*: affirming we had not known ſin, but by the law, unleſs it had SAID, *Thou ſhalt not covet*, Rom. vii. 7.; that the way of man is not in himſelf, Jer. x. 23.; that he is born like a wild aſſes colt, Job xi. 12.; and therefore declaring the Lord of all the earth to be the lawgiver to his creatures and people, Iſ. xxxiii. 22.

No believer then can contradict this doctrine; can ſay, man, or every man, can find out God, can know the Father, beſides the Son, and him to whom the Son ſhall *reveal* him; can aſſert, that man of himſelf can find out wiſdom, and had known ſin, if the law had not SAID, *&c.* and of himſelf know ſomething, and that man, not the Lord, is the lawgiver, *&c.* But becauſe this roots up the pride of the heart, which yet falls by ſeeking wiſdom by wrong means, ſome, not ſeeing the imaginations of mens hearts are *only evil continually*, Gen. vi. 5. and ſo never at any time productive of a *law, which is holy, juſt, and good*, Rom. vii. 12. do yet preſs Paul, in Rom. ii. 14. 15. into the ſervice of theſe vain fancies, their evil

evil imaginations, as if he had aſſerted, the Gentiles, without aid from revelation, did by nature the things of the law. Than which nothing was ever more diſtant from the mind of the apoſtle: for it can never be, that the Holy Spirit would, by one expreſſion or paſſage, contradict what he had in many declared. But if he is underſtood here to ſay, the Gentiles did by nature the things of the law, without a revelation, and know the being of a God and his law; then would this be contradictory to the whole deſign of ſcripture, which was to diſcover to us what we could not otherwiſe know; contradictory to thoſe cited above, eſpecially that which affirms, the natural man, that is, the man that hath no further light of underſtanding than that which he brought with him, even from his mother's womb, knoweth not the things of God, becauſe they are by πνευματικως a ſpiritual medium to be diſcerned. Therefore this cannot be the meaning of the Holy Ghoſt. Nor can it be the ſenſe; becauſe this makes him affirm, what ſuperſedes the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, that the Gentiles ſaw, and were, φυσει, by nature, or light or law of nature, (if the word be to be conſtrued as ſome will have it), juſtified, as doing the things of the law, who by nature, and ſo by the light, are declared to be ſinners, dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, wild, and children of wrath, nay, darkneſs itſelf, Rom. ii. 24. Eph. ii. 3. 5. 8.; and conſequently ſuch as could not ſee any thing, much leſs do the parts of the law: for in this ſenſe none ever did it but Chriſt.

We muſt then attempt to inveſtigate the plain ſenſe of the paſſage, which may be done by attending to the Greek, which runs thus. Οταν γαρ εθνη τα μη νομον εχοντα, φυσει τα τυ νομυ ποιη. *For when the Gentiles, having not the law by nature, do the things of the law,* &c. And from this paſſage we are taught, by way of condemnation of the Jews boaſting, who broke the moral law, chap. i. that the Gentiles, who are not Jews, and have not the law by nature, by birth under Judaiſm, as the Jews had, Gal. ii. 16. do the things of the law; not the moral, but ceremonial parts, τα τυ νομυ, ſuch as ſacrifice, *&c.* (which ſurely none will ever ſay the Gentiles did by nature); theſe having not the law as the Jews had, but

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from tradition of the rites, are the law to themſelves; the ceremonial law to themſelves, and ſo upon a footing with the Jews in that reſpect; which or who demonſtrate or ſhew the work of the law, its wrathful proceedings againſt ſinners, its condemning ſentence in the atoning vicarious ſacrifice, which the law was given to ſhew them, and ſo this work of the law againſt ſin, *&c.* (for the law worketh this wrath) written, ſo not naturally by birth, *&c.* no more than theſe letters I write were naturally on this paper; but by outward deſcriptions, by ceremonial legal types τα του νομου working upon them, as ſo many graving tools, to write and engrave theſe wrathful proceedings of the law in their hearts; their conſciences bearing witneſs συμμαρτυρουσης together, not with their pretended dictates of natural conſcience, (for then itſelf could not bear witneſs with itſelf), but with theſe typical notices, how far they deſerved to die, *&c.* and their thoughts between themſelves accuſing or elſe excuſing one another, as they pleaded the atonement or not. For Paul is to prove all under *ſin.* The Gentiles he proves to be ſuch, becauſe they apoſtatized from the public manifeſtations God made to them εφανερωσεν by the medium of ideas, Romans, chap. i. and of which ſo much was left, that they knew the judgment of God by tradition, and in types ſhewed it. The Jews he proves, tho' inſtructed out of the law, and not out of themſelves, by breaking the moral law, were in like ſituation with the Gentiles, content with mere outward worſhip; ſaving with this difference, that the Jews had the ceremonial law by nature, (birth), the Gentiles not by nature, but only by tradition of theſe things from their fathers, from which Peter ſays they were redeemed, 1 Pet. i. 18.; ſo that their profeſſing and keeping, not δικαιοσυνη, but the δικαιωματα, the juſtifying rites, the typical juſtifications, ver. 26. were in fact ſo far Judaiſm. But ſo far as both wanted the faith of Chriſt, pointed out in the rituals as the end of the law, none, the apoſtle concludes, could be juſtified from theſe deeds of the law, theſe things of the law, neither Jew nor Gentile being the true Jew, or having the circumciſion of the heart. But to ſhew how this agrees with the ſcope of the apoſtle's reaſoning in theſe

three chapters, with which this parentheſis ſtands connected, is too great a thing for an epiſtle. However, in general, let it be remembered, that God is ſhewing how the Gentiles, which keep the τα δικαιωματα, typical juſtifications, judgments, which they had not by nature, as the Jews had, are in fact Judaizers: but that neither had what to boaſt of, and neither could be juſtified by them, as both wanted faith; and that therefore the Jews were to be juſtified from or out of the faith, going from faith to faith, but the Gentiles through faith, chap. iii. 30. Though, after all, they who contend the Gentiles knew the law by nature, allow the Jews no ſuperiority or privilege, the Holy Spirit gives it them, chap. iii. 2. every way, chiefly becauſe unto them were committed the oracles of God, that they might be inſtructed, (as they were, not out of themſelves, but) out of the law, chap. ii. 18. and by this means know his will. So that the words afford no countenance to natural light, but teach the contrary; that there is none that underſtandeth, as well as none righteous in the practice of what they underſtand; with their tongues they ſet forth deceit, their mouth is full of curſing and bitterneſs, their feet are ſwift to ſhed blood.——This is the character of men that have left revelation; and worſe than this is the man without any, worſe than a brute, more brutiſh than to know, ſenſual, deviliſh. So neceſſary is, not a part, but all of the ONE THING needful, even the ſcriptural CHRIST—JEHOVAH GALENU, as a prieſt atoning for, as a prophet teaching, and as a king directing and ruling his church; or, in the language of ſcripture, Chriſt of God made unto us wiſdom, and righteouſneſs, and ſanctification, and redemption. This is the ſimple truth, unmixed with vain converſation and evil imaginations, that lays us low at the foot of the croſs as dead, that we may riſe in Chriſt's righteouſneſs, and be renewed in knowledge; not in any part from nature, from the old man, but wholly from revelation, and in true holineſs, after the image of him that created us. Thus low may we be laid therefore in ourſelves, in our apprehenſions, that thus high we may be exalted in the poſſeſſion of the one thing needful.

I. E T-

## LETTER VI.

### PROTOS to JUNIUS.

[Having quoted the preceding.]

*Feb.* 10. 1759.

— — — — This, Sir, is no laboured performance; for it was done in haſte, at my requeſt, by a learned friend; and had he not been limited to time, I had had his account of theſe three conteſted chapters. But this is ſufficient for me; nor can I conceive any gentleman of learning will affront his own underſtanding, or riſk his reputation, by denying the known ſenſe of the Greek words here uſed. Δικαιωματα, typical juſtifications, legal rites and ceremonies, ſtands confirmed Rom. ii. 26. Heb. ix. 1. Rev. xv. 4. & xix. 8, &c. Δικαιοσυνη, righteouſneſs or holineſs of life, is ſo, Luke i. 75. Acts xvii. 31. Rom. vi. 18. 19. 20. Rev. xix. 11. &c.—— I have ſaid above, I am not a judge of criticiſms on Greek words; but here are no criticiſms beyond the uſual meaning of the words. I wiſh ſcholaſtic diſtinctions may always loſe their force. Theſe are not of that ſort, but plain matters of fact, which alone can clear the ſenſe of theſe three chapters, or give them any ſenſe at all. And here I think I may reſt the matter with a good grace, if apoſtolic authority be thought ſufficient.—— I neither know nor care what ſenſe claſſic authors uſe the Greek words above in: for I am authoriſed by the Septuagint and apoſtles to uſe them as above. This will help to ſettle accounts between the Hebrew and Greek languages, and to juſtify the high church in their method of conſtruing ſcripture. Upon reading the ſtrictures above to ſome friends of yours in London, I was told my friend had perverted every text he had quoted in his diſſertation on the controverted one, (when that is attempted to be proved, it will be time enough to add to the number of his quotations); that he had reaſoned upon his own *data*, &c.; that the ſcriptures manifeſtly diſtinguiſh between natural and ſpiritual wiſdom. To which I reply, I know of no natural wiſdom the ſcriptures

tures ſpeak of, unleſs an acquired knowledge of natural object be called natural. We have no objection to that; for without doubt the knowledge of the objects of natural hiſtory is properly called natural knowledge. But this is not innate; nor can I poſſibly find where the ſcripture ſpeaks of moral knowledge as natural. Nay, nature knows nothing of morality; for after all the inſtructions that can be conveyed to, or inculcated upon men, we find it impoſſible to prevent their acquired knowledge of morality from running into ſelfiſhneſs, craftineſs, and diſhoneſt ſubtilety, without any check but what ariſes from their principles of education. Wiſdom, though natural to brutes in their ſphere, is the effect of doctrine, diſcipline, and inſtruction, in men. See *the proverbs of Solomon.* Knowledge is progreſſive, not natural; and but for this teaching, would be a foolery; nay a cheat, which the man naturally wiſe would reſent with rage. Nor have I any doubt, if the ſchoolboys natural wiſdom did not lie concealed from them, but they would rebel againſt their maſters. I have found many a man with the rudiments of the Latin, Greek, and other languages, written or ingraven on his mind, as well as the principles of the ſciences, by education; but, till I find the rudiments of thoſe languages, *&c.* natural to an Engliſhman, I will be content to be laughed at for believing nothing natural is written there. For, for a law of morality to be in the heart, from whence proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, *&c.* is as great a riddle to me, as for a volcano to ſpring out of, and be fed by the northern frozen ocean.

[The letter whence this extract is taken, (which was preceded by a ſhorter one of January 3. 1759, and followed by a ſtill ſhorter one of May 1. the ſame year), is of ſufficient length to make a pamphlet by itſelf. The writer, beſides animadverting on the two preceding letters of Junius, and other writings wherein the law of nature is maintained, inſiſts much in ſupporting and inforcing the ſame arguments againſt that law; which the reader may ſee largely ſet forth in the three pamphlets mentioned in the advertiſement at the beginning of this.

But

But as in the preſent extract he plainly intimates, that the controverſy may be reſted with a good grace on eſtabliſhing the ſenſe of Paul in Rom. ii. 14.; and as Junius, in his ſubſequent letter, appears alſo diſpoſed to reſt the ſtreſs of his plea there, it ſeems the leſs needful to produce any larger extract at preſent. And perhaps Protos might chuſe, that what further has occurred to him, during this controverſy, for ſtrengthening his plea, ſhould appear before his readers in a more cloſe and connected view, or leſs interrupted by incidents of correſpondence of ſmall concern to them, than in the preſent letters. As to this, however, he knows he is at liberty to take his own choice.—Mean while, as he thinks no ſmall regard is due to what is advanced in a late book called *Sophron*, it may be proper to lay before the reader a quotation from it, as he has given it in his letter, the book itſelf not being at hand It is introduced and cloſed with a few words of his own ]

—It is preſumed the Heathens knew at leaſt as much of the matter as our moral philoſophers. We will hear what they ſay of the ſource of their knowledge, and of the rule of their manners; *i. e.* whether they received it from nature, revelation, or tradition. And here I ſhall treat you with a quotation from *Sophron, or, Nature's characteriſtics, &c* ——" In the firſt place, it is a palpable falſehood, that the Heathens pretended to derive their knowledge from the light of nature; becauſe contrary to the very confeſſion they themſelves make, concerning the means by which they came at it. For they — aſſerted a total darkneſs, blindneſs, and ignorance in themſelves, an inability to prove or diſcover the nature of God, his will, or the creation, or what virtue or truth was: that they therefore derived what knowledge they had from the gods, and from probable fable, or a divine word, or an old tradition; and attributed to their languages and arts a divine original: the wiſeſt of them having recourſe to the oracle to inquire what religion they ſhould be of, they affirmed that theſe things could not come but from the gods: that we cannot know their will without a prophet to reveal it to us:

that

that there never had been, nor was a wiſe man upon the face of the earth; and that alone was wiſdom which no mortal ever arrived at: that whoſoever denies virtue is owing to inſtruction, denies there is any ſuch thing as virtue; for it proceeds from being taught; and he that hinders the teaching of it, does what he can to root it out of the world. And amidſt all theſe notices, they were ſceptics, not out of obſtinacy, but through a conviction of the narrowneſs [of human knowledge *perhaps*]; and ſurrounded with ſo thick a darkneſs, as to doubt whether reaſon were a bleſſing or not. So that thoſe very perſons who had been repreſented to have lived under the direction of the light of nature only, and to have had from it the law, and accounts they give of things, were to a man evidence againſt its exiſtence, or abilities to inſtruct them. And though ſome called their notions innate, for want of ſeeing how they came by them; yet they imputed their knowledge, and philoſophy, the mother of all arts and ſciences, to divine information and tradition, that is, to a revelation. And the accounts of the preſent Heathen world atteſt alſo, that they hold their knowledge to have come from their gods. Seneca ſays, Nature has not given knowledge. Plato affirms the depravity of nature, and that he is ignorant of every thing; that they ſtumbled upon truth, but did not know it; that they were not to expect it from him; that the mind of the gods is entirely hid from men; that he never met with any who knew what virtue was; that the knowledge of the exiſtent being is the gift of the gods to men. He refers the knowledge of the creation to probable fable, or to ſome divine word. When he ſpeaks of the knowledge of the gods, it is, They delivered it to us; when of the immortality of the ſoul, he ſays, Old tradition certifies; and ſo makes this, and not nature and reaſon, the ground of his knowledge: for he ranges the contemplation of all divine things among his wonderfuls beyond nature. And Julius Scaliger and Gale ſhew plainly, Plato robbed the Phœnician theology, as well as others did the Egyptian ſchools, according to Juſtin Martyr's aſſertion. Who was firſt a Stoic, then a Peripatetic,

then

then a Pythagorean, then a Platoniſt, that the ancients borrowed from the prophets. He furthermore ſays, No mortal can make laws, and that the firſt inſtitution of them belongs not to us; but the greateſt, beſt, and firſt belongs to Apollo at Delphos: he adds, All laws came from tradition after a flood. Cicero, who reviewed all the ſyſtems of the philoſophers, concludes, We are blind to the diſcernment of wiſdom; and that Nature without teaching is blind: that a mind of divine underſtanding would be at a loſs to chuſe, whether the world was made or not; and if made, whether by divine counſel or not; and ſays, that at Athens, the very ſeat of Minerva, the people ſent to inquire of Apollo, what religion they ſhould be of. Democritus ſays, he had rather diſcover one true cauſe of things, than be maſter of the Perſian empire. Pliny ſays, Man knows nothing without being taught; not to ſpeak, not to walk, not to eat. Heſiod ſays, Jupiter inſtituted the laws for men. Demoſthenes ſays, All men ſhould obey law, becauſe it is the invention and gift of God. Xenophon did nothing without the advice of the gods; and if any doubt aroſe, his conſtant advice, in which Cicero followed him, was, to go to the oracle for inſtruction. We know alſo, from all the accounts we have in their hiſtorians and poets, and from their auguries, *&c.* that this was an univerſal practice. And indeed, their whole religious ſervice was built upon a preſumption of a revelation from their gods and fates; and that they ſhould have their directions from revelation. And as we have the knowledge of the ſtatutes of our own country from the publications of another; ſo we find the famous lawgivers pretending a divine revelation of their laws to them; Minos from Jupiter, Chorondos from Saturn, Draco and Solon from Minerva, Zamolxes from Veſta, Triſmegiſtus from Mercury, Zoroaſter from Oromazes, Numa from Egeria, Lycurgus from Apollo, and Mahomet from Gabriel: And Indians, Chineſe, and Americans, have done the ſame, as appears in the univerſal hiſtory of religious ceremonies."

I might multiply quotations from the ſame author: but I think theſe quite ſufficient to convince any reaſonable

able man, that the Heathens had more modeſty than the moderns, who plead for natural notions, *&c.* The references to the authors from whence theſe quotations are taken, are in the author's notes, from whom I borrowed them.

## LETTER VII.

### JUNIUS to PROTOS.

*Sept.* 25. 1759.

——— But as you have introduced a learned friend for your ſecond, it may perhaps be thought needful, I ſhould take ſome notice of the light he has endeavoured to throw upon our controverſy. This may be thought the more needful, becauſe you have retreated that he might advance, while you have withdrawn the ſenſe you formerly eſpouſed of the noted paſſage Rom. ii. 14. to give place to his; which, you tell me, "is no "laboured performance, for it was done in haſte at my "requeſt by a learned friend; and had he not been "limited to time, I had had his account of theſe "three conteſted chapters: but this is ſufficient for "me," *&c.* And he himſelf ſays of it, "But to ſhew "how this agrees with the ſcope of the apoſtle's rea-"ſoning in theſe three chapters, with which this paren-"theſis ſtands connected, is too great a thing for an "epiſtle." —— Let us now attend to your learned friend.

1. He introduces himſelf by endeavouring to ſhew, that the whole tenor of the ſcripture oppoſes the exiſtence of a law of nature; and that therefore it would be abſurd to ſuppoſe one ſingle paſſage countenanced what was oppoſed by all the reſt. To this purpoſe he cites many paſſages, evincing the ignorance and wickedneſs of men; from which he infers they have naturally no law. For inſtance, the ſcripture ſays, the imaginations of mens hearts *are only evil continually*. Now, becauſe mens imaginations are always evil or ſinful, as being againſt ſome law; therefore, according to him, they

they have naturally no law! This he would prove by the following curious argument. "The imaginations "of mens hearts are *only evil continually*, and ſo never "at any time productive of a law which is holy, juſt, "and good." And thus we are taught, that wickedneſs can never be productive of remorſe! Again, according to his uſe of Rom. vii. 7. the context muſt ſound thus: Since Paul was once alive *without the law*, even before the *commandment came*, and SAID, *Thou ſhalt not covet*, but when it *came*, and *ſaid* ſo, found it to be unto death, becauſe then ſin revived and he died, or, ſin taking occaſion by the commandment, deceived and ſlew him; therefore, until Paul thus *knew ſin*, until the commandment thus *came*, and *ſaid*, he was all his lifetime before, in every ſenſe, without the law, utterly a ſtranger to the commandment, and particularly, during the whole time of his attendance on Gamaliel, quite deſtitute of any notion whatever of the difference between ſin and righteouſneſs! Your learned friend, I find, would make a notable commentator. But, not to dwell on every text he advances, I ſhall take ſome notice of that on which he lays the greateſt ſtreſs, *viz.* 1 Cor. ii. 14. For while he calls the notion of a law of nature contradictory to all the texts he had cited, as well as to the whole deſign of the ſcripture, he calls it *eſpecially* ſo to this. Paul ſpeaking of thoſe who were enlightened by the Holy Spirit in the knowledge of the Lord of glory, as the great ſcope of the ancient ſcriptures, calls them, on that account, *ſpiritual* men, in oppoſition to all others, whom he calls *natural* men, and among whom he ranks the Jewiſh rulers, who, however wiſe in other reſpects, were deſtitute of this knowledge. Having largely deſcribed the firſt of theſe two claſſes, and how they obtained their peculiar knowledge, he ſays of the ſecond, *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are fooliſhneſs unto him; neither can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned.* Now, according to our author, the *natural man* denotes thoſe who are deſtitute of all knowledge by means of revelation. He grants, then, that there is a claſs of men who have received no knowledge by revelation; ſo that the influence of reve-

lation is not univerſal. And it is evident from the text, that the perſons chiefly pointed at there, are grown men, and not infants; for they are deſcribed as perſons able to laugh at the goſpel, or to whom the goſpel is fooliſhneſs, even as Paul ſays, in the foregoing chapter, it was to the Greeks. But this is not all: our author conſiders the natural man, not only as knowing nothing by revelation, but alſo as one "that hath no further "light of underſtanding than that which he brought "with him, even from his mother's womb." Now, if we ſuppoſe our author to have his eye on the text, he grants a great deal more than is ſought. All that is ſought is, that it be allowed men have a natural inſtinct, finding them guilty when they do evil: for we freely allow, that this inſtinct may be greatly blunted or refined by education. But our author, ſtill ſuppoſing him to have his eye on the whole text, grants, or rather affirms, that the natural men, to whom the goſpel is fooliſhneſs, have no more light of underſtanding than they were born with. Yet who can deny, that ſuch men have, in all ages, been very able to reaſon juſtly about the difference between right and wrong in various caſes? Whence then had they this ability in reaſoning? Why, there's no help for it; we muſt even ſay they were born ſkilful reaſoners, and came into the world ſneering at the goſpel! —— But further, according to our author, till men receive the things of the Spirit of God, they cannot diſtinguiſh right from wrong; yea, till they receive the ſpiritual diſcernment ſpoke of in the text, they know no more than they did when they were born, that is, no more than a wild aſs's colt. Therefore all who are not illuminated as Paul and the firſt Chriſtians were, muſt be conſidered before God, both now and in the future judgment, as on the ſame footing with infants; that is, to uſe Paul's words, as *having done neither any good or evil!* —— What a jewel of a commentator have we got here! I wonder where you found him. But I have the leſs occaſion to preſs hard on him here, as you yourſelf appear ſenſible, that his explication needs to be protected by another explication, while you go about to diſtinguiſh in ſuch a manner upon the words

words *natural* and *ſpiritual*, as to render them of no uſe to your friend, in drawing any advantage to his cauſe from this text, which he conſiders as his *eſpecial* fortreſs. The remaining part of his introduction contains ſuch a cluſter of abſurdities as would be too tedious and not worth while to unfold. I ſhall content myſelf, therefore, with quoting his words, and pointing my finger at them. At the cloſe of his comment on the text now mentioned, he proceeds thus: "Therefore this "[*viz.* that a law of nature is affirmed Rom. ii. 14.] "cannot be the meaning of the Holy Ghoſt. Nor can "it be the ſenſe, becauſe this makes him affirm what "ſuperſedes the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, that the Gen"tiles ſaw, and were φυσει by nature, or light or law of "nature, (if the word be conſtrued as ſome will have it), "juſtified as doing the things of the law, who by na"ture, and ſo by the light, are declared to be ſinners, "dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, wild, and children of "wrath, nay darkneſs itſelf, Rom. xi. 24. Eph. ii. 3. 5. "8. and conſequently ſuch as could not ſee any thing, "much leſs do the parts of the law: for in this ſenſe "none ever did it but Chriſt." The Spectator ſomewhere defines nonſenſe, as that which puts it out of a man's power to tell diſtinctly where to affirm or where to deny. The quotation now given, where our author ſums up his evidence againſt the law of nature, I venture to uphold as a true ſpecimen of nonſenſe, even though he ſhould get time to add as many words to it as he pleaſes, in order to give it any tolerable ſenſe. So that I muſt own, you had good reaſon to ſay, this performance of your learned friend *was done in haſte*, and was *no laboured performance*. So much for his introduction. Let us now attend to his procedure with the principally conteſted paſſage in Rom. ii.

2. Our author, ſenſible that the text, as it preſently ſtands, and has ſtood ſince firſt wrote, affords not one word, that, by the utmoſt power of perverſion, can anſwer his purpoſe, boldly imagines a word of his own chuſing to be inſerted into the text; and then proceeds, with all the wantonneſs of Hutchinſonian licence, to diſtinguiſh and comment upon the word inſerted by his

own imagination. After this it might ſeem ſilly trifling, to proceed any further with him, were it not that it may be thought ſome way requiſite, in order to make his wanton abuſe of the ſcripture the more fully manifeſt.

3. In order to aſcertain the ſenſe of the conteſted phraſe τα του νομου, there is no neceſſity for conſulting, far leſs for reſting the force of our concluſion on the Greek phraſeology of claſſic authors, as you would inſinuate I do. The current Greek of the New Teſtament is altogether ſufficient. Similar phraſes, ſuch as τα του θεου, τα του κοσμου,—ανθρωπου,—κυριου,—σαρκος,—πνευματος, &c. occur in great abundance; and it is well known that the article τα, in all ſuch phraſes, ſignifies, in general, what belongs to the perſon or thing mentioned, without any other limitation than the context naturally ſuggeſts. If it be inquired, then, what the Gentiles did when they did what belonged to the law? why, the very conteſted ſentence itſelf informs us, "They ſhewed the work of the law written "in their hearts, their conſcience bearing joint witneſs, "and their reaſonings between themſelves accuſing or a-"pologizing." If, after ſo plain words, it ſhould ſtill be inquired, what is the work of the law? Paul elſewhere tells us, the law worketh wrath. If this is not enough, our author himſelf has the following words as part of his paraphraſe, "Who demonſtrate, or ſhew the work of the "law, its wrathful proceedings againſt ſinners, its con-"demning ſentence," &c. Moreover, the apoſtle leaves us not to gueſs by what outward appearances the work of the law written on the heart is ſhewn or made manifeſt. He plainly refers to an obvious fact daily obſerved among mankind, even their conſcience bearing joint witneſs, while they mutually accuſe each other, or apologize; for we may daily obſerve their conſcience bearing joint witneſs, as to what is blame-worthy, while they paſſionately oppoſe each other in their reaſonings as to the perſonal application of the blame, and in what degree. I have only to add here, that we can ſcarce think of a poorer ſhift in the way of perverſion, than the attempt to ſeparate the expreſſion, *by nature*, in ver. 14. from the ſecond clauſe, in order to conſtrue it with the firſt. That verſe evidently forms an argument, conſiſting of four members

members or clauſes, the laſt two drawing a clear inference from the poſition laid in the firſt two: "For "when the Gentiles, who have not the law, by nature do "what belongs to the law; theſe having not the law, are "a law unto themſelves." The point the apoſtle labours to prove is evidently this, That the Gentiles, not having the law of Moſes, are a law unto themſelves. That they are ſo, he infers from this poſition, that by nature they do what belongs to the law. Then in ver. 15. he proceeds to illuſtrate and prove that poſition, by referring to the moſt obvious fact daily to be ſeen every where. That verſe then muſt determine what Paul means by doing naturally what belongs to the law. Now, let any one, keeping his eyes on the four clauſes of ver. 14. only obſerve how the third reſumes the firſt, and conſpires with the fourth to draw an eaſy inference from the poſition laid down in the ſecond, and he will naturally fall into the common pointing, which I have followed. Whereas, by departing from the common pointing, the chief propriety and force of the apoſtle's reaſoning is loſt: for I can only be properly ſaid to be to myſelf what I do by nature. If I be aſked, what moves me when I walk? my anſwer is, I am mover to myſelf, for I do it by nature. Take a homely ſimilitude. Suppoſe the author of a late contrivance to keep ſeafaring people from ſinking, by the proper application of a buoy or ſome buoyant matter, ſuch as cork, was to be aſked by ſome very ignorant perſon, how fiſh, who had no ſuch buoy, kept themſelves up in the water; I apprehend his anſwer, (however ſimple the caſe), would be very juſt, if he ſhould ſay, That fiſh, in reſpect of buoyancy, were nothing ſhort of the men beſt furniſhed with adventitious helps: "For when fiſh, which have not a buoy, by nature do what belongs to a buoy; theſe, having not a buoy, are a buoy unto themſelves." If I be aſked, by what rule I diſtinguiſh between light and darkneſs, pleaſure and pain, *&c.*? my anſwer is, I naturally act the part of a rule here, ſo I am a rule to myſelf in ſuch caſes. In like manner, I can eaſily conceive, that, independently of all language and cuſtom, if I ſaw one unexpectedly preſerved from ſtarving, by his neighbour preſenting him the

the half of what victuals he had, and at the ſame time ſaw the relieved perſon beat his benefactor in order to deprive him of his remaining half; I can eaſily conceive, I ſay, that I would have a very ſhocking idea of the ungrateful perſon's diſpoſition and character, by mere untaught inſtinct. By obſerving the different emotions of natural inſtinct in various caſes, legiſlators and wiſe men have formed ſyſtems of laws and general rules of behaviour. God, in a peculiar manner, acted as the legiſlator to Iſrael: and Iſrael's legiſlator is the author of nature, who gave the various tribes of animals their ſeveral inſtincts, as he declares himſelf in the book of Job; and who forms the eye, plants the ear, teaches man knowledge, and endues the whole race with their peculiar inſtinct, as well as the wiſe man and the legiſlator with ſuperior abilities. Nothing can be more ridiculous, then, than to ſee our author ſtaring in the face the aſſertors of a law of nature, and declaring with ſolemn impertinence, "No believer "then—can aſſert—that man, not the Lord, is the "lawgiver."

4. Having premiſed this much, let us now obſerve our author's imagined addition to the text. He would have us underſtand it as if wrote thus, "The Gentiles, who have not the law by nature, do the δικαιωματα of the law." If our author could have produced any precedent or example in either Old or New Teſtament to warrant his thus ſupplying the phraſe, no doubt he would have done it: but no ſuch thing being pretended, it muſt reſt at preſent on his bare authority: ſo there is no room left us to diſpute with him here. The only thing that remains to be conſidered is his wiſdom in the matter; and, ſince he pretends no ſmall regard to the ſcripture, whether, by his wiſe contrivance, he has helped Paul to reaſon more juſtly, to ſpeak better ſenſe, or more conſiſtently, than he was thought to do before this contrivance occurred. As the Greek word which our author has given us for a ſupplement, occurs very often in ſcripture, and as he does not pretend to fetch the meaning of it from any other book, it would ſeem, we are yet at liberty to underſtand it according to its common uſe there. Now, it is happy for us, at the entry, that the full identic phraſe

phraſe which our author would have us to read in the conteſted verſe, is to be found in the ſame context, even in the 26th verſe of the ſame chapter, and no where elſe that I know. That I may not ſeem to arrogate the Hutchinſonian licence of diſlocating words or half-ſentences, and then giving ſcope to imagination, I ſhall here quote a few verſes. Paul addreſſes the Jew thus: 21. *Thou therefore which teacheſt another, teacheſt thou not thyſelf? thou that preacheſt a man ſhould not ſteal, doſt thou ſteal?* 22. *Thou that ſayeſt a man ſhould not commit adultery, doſt thou commit adultery? Thou that abhoreſt idols, doſt thou commit ſacrilege?* 23. *Thou that makeſt thy boaſt of the law, through tranſgreſſion of the law diſhonoureſt thou God?* 24. *For the name of God is blaſphemed among the Gentiles, through you, as it is written,* 25. *For circumciſion verily profiteth, if thou practiſe the law; but if thou be a tranſgreſſor of the law, thy circumciſion is made uncircumciſion.* 26. *Therefore, if the circumciſion keep* the dicaiomata of the law, *ſhall not his uncircumciſion be counted for circumciſion?* 27. *And ſhall not uncircumciſion which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumciſion doſt tranſgreſs the law?* Here it muſt be evident to all, except an Hutchinſonian, whoſe mind is ſo infatuated by the habit of quibbling about words, as to be blind and deaf to the cleareſt coherence and connection of language, that to practiſe the law, to keep the *dicaiomata* of the law, and to fulfil the law, are all expreſſions of the ſame import, and are all equally oppoſed to tranſgreſſing the law, or to ſtealing, committing adultery, *&c.* It is no leſs evident, that the divine *dicaiomata* every where denote the ſtatutes, ordinances, deciſions or judgments of God, prohibiting and puniſhing all unrighteouſneſs and ungodlineſs of men, or commanding and rewarding righteouſneſs. It is equally evident, that *dicaiomata* done, kept, or practiſed by men, are precepts obſerved and obeyed by them; and that *dicaiomata* done by the Deity, are judgments performed by him againſt the wicked, or in favour of the righteous. Agreeable to all this, we find in Rom. v. the *dicaioma* of Chriſt oppoſed in one verſe to ſin, and in another to condemnation; ſo

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in Rev. xix. 8. we hear of *dicaiomata* beſtowed on the ſaints when they are glorified; and in Rev. xv. 4. we find *dicaiomata* bearing a twofold aſpect, that is, both rewarding and puniſhing.——But to return to our text: The neareſt phraſe I find in the New Teſtament to that in queſtion is in Rom. viii. 4. where mention is made of the *dicaioma* of the law: and Chryſoſtom is well ſupported by the context when he illuſtrates its import by theſe words, το τελος, ὁ σκοπος, το κατορθωμα. As the word in the ſingular denotes the great ſcope, end, or righteous intention of the law; ſo, in the plural, it denotes the various ſtatutes or precepts wherein that intention is particularly ſpecified. We have now before us abundance of evidence, to ſhew that the *dicaiomata* of the law, mentioned by Paul, Rom. ii. and there ſpecified by him to prevent our being impoſed on by the quibbling or juggling of impoſtors, are the ſame with the ſtatutes ſo often mentioned by Ezekiel, chapters xviii. xx. and xxxiii. and which, like Paul, he frequently ſpecifies with a particular detail, oppoſing the righteous character to the robber, the ſhedder of blood, and every evil doer; even thoſe ſtatutes which, we are aſſured on the higheſt authority, if a man do, he ſhall even live in them, and which are accordingly called the ſtatutes of life. Concerning theſe ſtatutes, Paul, in Rom. ii. evidently reaſons in the ſame ſtrain with Ezekiel, while he declares, that not the hearers, but the doers of the law ſhall be juſtified; and that if the Gentiles keep the ſtatutes of the law, this will prove them to have the true inward circumciſion, even the circumciſion of the heart, which he expreſsly oppoſes to that which is outward in the fleſh. For it is evident, that in the circumciſed in heart, and them only, the righteous intention of the law has its genuine effect; and it is no leſs evident, that to the circumciſed in heart the promiſe of life is directed, and infallibly aſcertained. But let us now return to our author.

5. He has even the aſſurance to make Paul aſſert, that the Gentiles kept the *dicaiomata* of the law. Than which nothing can be more falſe; and I may freely add, ſcarce any thing more impudently ſo. The Gentiles kept the *dicaiomata* of the law! Does our author imagine

gine that Paul dreamed, as he does, when he wrote? The Gentiles, who, we were told a little ago, were ſo darkened that they "could not ſee any thing, much leſs "do the parts of the law," yet kept the *dicaiomata* of the law! They muſt have gropped well in the dark it ſeems. He has even had the effrontery to refer to ver. 26. in ſupport of this. It would ſeem he has wrote not only in a hurry, but alſo in the dark. For had he enjoyed but as much light as that he could ſee any thing, he might have ſeen that what Paul ſays of the Gentiles in that verſe, is prefaced with an IF. Take a parallel. If our author writes to the purpoſe, he deſerves to be read with reſpectful attention. Now, ſhould he read this ſentence, and either not ſee or forget the conditional word that begins it, he might take it as a very ſerious commendation of what he has written.——Moreover, if the Gentiles kept the *dicaiomata* of the law, why were their thoughts employed in alternate accuſations and apologies? Were it worth while to run through the text and context, with the new light thrown upon it by our author's ſupplement, what a curious train of inferences would ariſe! But not to outrun our author too far, we muſt pauſe a little, and reflect, that as he introduced the ſupplement by his own authority, without precedent or example; ſo, by the ſame authority, he may affix to it what ſenſe he pleaſes. Accordingly, he appoints and ordains the *dicaiomata* of the law to ſignify, "not the moral, but ceremonial parts—ſuch as "ſacrifice, *&c.*——the juſtifying rites, the typical juſti-"fications." And by the ſame authority, he may next tell us, it ſignifies typical nut-crackers. Is your friend ſerious or not? If he be ſerious, you have certainly thought he ſtood in great need of help, when you referred to the *dicaiomata*, ſaid, in the book of the Revelation, to be beſtowed on the ſaints when they are glorified, as an inſtance of typical juſtifications! But to proceed: No body can deny, that the law of Moſes contained many ſtatutes concerning types; nor can it be ſaid that Paul was ignorant of them; for he reaſons largely about them, in his epiſtle to the Hebrews, and diſtinguiſhes them from other ſtatutes, in the cleareſt and

moſt explicit manner, while he calls them *dicaiomata of the fleſh*, and at the ſame time gives a detail of the particulars they reſpected, meats, drinks, and divers waſhings. He likewiſe, in the introduction of the ſame paſſage, ſays, "The firſt covenant had alſo *dicaiomata* "*of ſervice*, and a wordly ſanctuary." And, in another place, he calls the ſtatute which eſtabliſhed the Levitical prieſthood, *a carnal commandment*. But what has all this to do with Paul's diſcourſe, Rom. ii.? Tho' the IF at the beginning of ver. 26. might poſſibly eſcape our author, by means of ſome mote in his eye, or on his ſpectacles; yet, if he could ſee any thing, he might have ſeen the five preceding verſes, where the apoſtle, in the moſt explicit manner, declares what he means by tranſgreſſing and by keeping the *dicaiomata* of the law, and where he oppoſes them, in the plaineſt words, to ſtealing, committing adultery, idolatry, and ſacrilege. How will our author turn himſelf here? But Hutchinſonians being uſed to legerdemain in handling the ſcripture, can ſeldom be in a great ſtrait. Perhaps, when he gets more leiſure, he will go and fetch me from the Hebrew ſome new ſenſe of theft, adultery, *&c.* Don't be ſurpriſed; for I have actually ſeen an Hutchinſonian, in print too, critically refining on ſeveral of the ten commands, in ſuch a manner as would lead us to think, that Chriſt and his apoſtles, in their common way of referring to them, neither led their hearers to attend to, nor themſelves underſtood, the principal or primary intention of them *. But the beſt of all is, Paul is ſuppoſed, in this chapter, to be reaſoning at large on the difference between the moral and ceremonial parts of the law, or proving that the Jews neglected the former, and the Gentiles obſerved the latter. Here, then, if any where, ſuch epithets or other notes of diſtinction as are uſed in the epiſtle to the Hebrews were neceſſary. Yet, to our great ſurpriſe, there is not to be found, in the whole chapter, one word that can denote either ceremonies in general, or any one ceremony in particular, except the word *circumciſion*. And, as to that word, Paul has ta-

* See the forementioned *Creed founded on truth, &c.*

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ken all due care to aſſure us, that in the whole of his reference to the Gentiles, he does not mean by it that circumciſion which is outward in the fleſh, but that of the heart; in the ſpirit, not in the letter; while he oppoſes it in the cleareſt manner to that circumciſion which the Jews who kept not the *dicaiomata* of the law gloried in; yet, under this word, our author, after affirming that the Gentiles kept the *dicaiomata* of the law, would have Paul ſay, that their doing ſo was *in fact ſo far Judaiſm!* So far then we have ſeen what attention our author gives to what he reads, and how ſagacious his inferences.

6. But as we have hitherto allowed him to take his own way; after ſtopping him a little, to aſk whither he goes, let us once more give him looſe rein, and ſee whither his courſe will tend. Be it ſo for once, then, that, by the *dicaiomata* of the law, we are to underſtand its rites or ceremonies, or its ſtatutes about ſacrifice, *&c.*; and let the inquiry now be, Whether the Gentiles obſerved all or any of the rites of the divine law? Now, then, if the conſent of Hutchinſonians can reaſonably be expected in any thing, I apprehend I ought to expect it in maintaining, that the whole of the Jewiſh ritual was deviſed, and in the ſtrongeſt manner pointed, againſt every ſpecies of idolatry. This, however, I can with all freedom maintain, either with or without their conſent. In like manner, with or without their conſent, I am authoriſed to maintain, that what the Gentiles ſacrificed, they ſacrificed to devils, and not to God. Accordingly, we find all their religious rites without exception, called in ſcripture, I know not how often, abominations, and deteſtable things. Yet, be aſtoniſhed all ye ſons of Hutchinſon, who are not yet quite bereft of ſober reflection! ſome of your brethren, hurried on by zeal to ſupport one of your fundamental maxims, have arrived at ſuch heaven-daring impiety as to ſet the abominations of the Heathen on a footing with the ſtatutes of the Moſt High, while they maintain, that the Heathen, by practiſing the rites he abominates, keep the *dicaiomata* of the divine law. If you are incapable of bluſhing here, what ſhall I ſay? I will at leaſt ſay, Give

me no more of your learned friend's gloſſes on the ſcripture. If he wants to give vent to his thoughts, let him print, and let the face of the ſun behold the progreſs of Hutchinſonian zeal againſt the law of nature: let it behold that zeal which ſprings from an atheiſtical ſource, ſending forth ſtreams ſuitable to ſuch a ſource. And let him remember, with inward ſatisfaction, that another impious Hutchinſonian ſentiment, to wit, the motion for unſheathing the ſword of Joſhua in our days, is treated by our benign government with juſt contempt, otherwiſe his head would be in danger. You have reaſon to remember this along with him, that, on the preſent occaſion, you may learn to bluſh at your reaſonings againſt that tolerating benignity by whoſe indulgence you are allowed to breathe. For you ſtill continue to reaſon againſt toleration, and even to pretend ſcripture for your warrant! But I am now furniſhed with a new argument for tolerating idolatrous Heathens even in the boſom of Chriſtian nations. For, ſuppoſe there was a well-frequented temple to Apollo on one hand of you, and one to Diana on the other, why ſhould you diſcourage the ſacrificers, while it can be proved from the New Teſtament, that they are employed in keeping and doing —— as your friend profanely ſpeaks? Yea, it would ſeem, they might have ſome degree of true faith in their ſacrificing. For, ſays our author, "But ſo far "as both [*viz.* Jews and Gentiles] wanted the faith of "Chriſt pointed out in the rituals as the end of the "law; none, the apoſtle concludes, could be juſtified "from theſe deeds of the law," *&c.* Further, to this purpoſe, in deſcribing the Heathen, he ſpeaks of "their "thoughts between themſelves accuſing or elſe excuſing "one another, as they pleaded the atonement or not." Not to be diverted by every abſurdity that occurs (ſuch as, the atonement an excuſe for ſin, *&c.*), it is worth while to obſerve, how ſtrangely even the ſpirit of perſecution will ſometimes, at certain interviews, ſhake hands with catholic charity; and no charity can be more catholic, than that which allows the idolatrous Heathen to be employed in keeping and doing —— as our author ſpeaks. —— Were it needful to bring any further evi-

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dence to illuſtrate ſo clear a point as that in hand, I might produce the various paſſages where God, ſpeaking of the precepts of his law, calls them *my ſtatutes*, in oppoſition to the ſtatutes of the Heathen. I might refer to Ezek. xx. where the ſubject is handled at great length; where God often commends his ſtatutes to Iſrael, as ſtatutes, which if a man did, he ſhould live in them, in oppoſition to the ſtatutes of the Heathen, which he calls *not good*, and *whereby they ſhould not live*. Yet our author would have us to think, that only by thoſe abominable ſtatutes, which were the product of the evil imaginations of mens hearts, was preſerved among the Heathen that law which is holy, juſt, and good. He would have us to think, that only by ſuch abominations the fear of God's diſpleaſure againſt ſin was preſerved among the Gentiles; whereas, if we view the fact rightly, we will find, it was chiefly by ſuch abominations that the natural impreſſion of God's fear was defaced, and men hardened in the practice of the moſt unnatural wickedneſs. —— To crown all, though the ſcripture every where makes δικαιοσυνη, righteouſneſs, to conſiſt in keeping the *dicaiomata* of the law; yet our author maintains, that men may keep the *dicaiomata* without keeping the δικαιοσυνη of the law! And the beſt of it is, he would have this to be the ſenſe of a paſſage, where Paul evidently makes *practiſing the law, fulfilling the law, and keeping its dicaiomata*, to mean the ſame thing; yea, where he clearly maintains, that the keeping of the *dicaiomata* demonſtrates the circumciſion of the heart! Are you ſerious, when, with an air of confidence, you intimate your apprehenſion, that one would run the riſk of affronting his underſtanding by oppoſing ſuch criticiſm? You inform me, you was told by ſome of your neighbours in London, that your friend "had perverted every text he had quoted in his "diſſertation on the controverted one." In my view, they would have affronted their underſtandings if they had ſaid otherwiſe. Was the apoſtaſy of the Heathen always growing worſe and worſe down to Paul's time, and did he yet find them keeping and doing, as our author ſpeaks; yea keeping in ſuch a manner as proved them

them to have the true circumciſion of the heart, if any coherence be allowed in the context! yet, to increaſe our wonder, not keeping the righteouſneſs of the law!

7. Having now ſeen our author to the far end of his courſe, let us obſerve a little by what ſort of reaſoning he would deſtroy the force and propriety of the expreſſion, *by nature*, in our text. Paul's kinſmen were Jews, or ſacrificers, by nature, as being introduced to the practice of ſacrifice by birth, education, and tradition from their fathers; but the Gentiles, who were in like manner introduced to the practice of ſacrifice, were not ſacrificers by nature! The only difference that can affect the point in hand, is, that the ſacred tradition of the Jews had an authentic conveyance, and received from age to age additional ſupernatural proofs of its authenticity, by manifeſt interpoſitions of the Deity in its favour; which cannot be ſaid of the vague tradition of the Heathen, whether merely oral, or partly recorded in books, in imitation of the ſacred books of the Jews. This being the true ſtate of the caſe, one careful to ſpeak ſtrictly would ſay, that ſo far as a man's being ſaid to practiſe any thing by nature, refers to his peculiar circumſtances of birth and education, the Gentiles were more properly ſacrificers by nature, than the Jews, and that for the reaſon already given: becauſe the Jews had from age to age freſh ſupernatural evidence to inforce their practice, or revive it when ready to decay. Yea, the apoſtle himſelf ſeems to uſe the expreſſion *by nature* in ſome ſuch reſtricted ſenſe, when, ſpeaking of the Gentiles as he ſaw and found them, he calls them the *uncircumciſion which is by nature*, in diſtinction from the Jews, who were poſſeſſed of the letter of the law, and the outward circumciſion, which he claſſes with that letter. Take his own words. *And ſhall not uncircumciſion which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumciſion doſt tranſgreſs the law?* Yet no body needs be at a loſs to ſee Paul's obvious meaning, when he ſays, *We who are Jews by nature, and not ſinners of the Gentiles*; ſince it is evident that Paul and his kinſmen were born and educated Jews. But from all this it would be fooliſh to infer, that either Jews or Gentiles

tiles had or kept their law of ſacrifice, in ſuch a ſenſe, *by nature*, as that they could be ſaid to be that law to themſelves; ſince it is evident, that both of them had it by tradition from their fathers; yea ſuch a tradition as plainly diſowned its having ſprung from the obſervation of nature, or any reaſonings on the courſe of nature. Now, as the apoſtle's manifeſt ſcope is, to evince all men obnoxious to the judgment of God, as found guilty by his law, the diſtinct preciſion of his language evidently ſhews his ſenſe to be, That though the Gentiles had not the outward, adventitious, traditionary letter of the law, which God gave to the fathers of the Jewiſh nation; yet, by nature, they acted the part of the law to ſuch effect, that though they had not the law from without, like the Jews, they were notwithſtanding a law unto themſelves, and accordingly ſhewed the work of the law written in their hearts. Let us now ſee our author's reaſoning in his own words. "The Gentiles, who were "not Jews, and have not the law by nature, by "birth under Judaiſm, as the Jews had, Gal. ii. 16. "—theſe having not the law as the Jews had, but "from tradition of the rites, are the law to themſelves, "the ceremonial law to themſelves, and ſo upon a footing "with the Jews in that reſpect; which or who demon-"ſtrate or ſhew the work of the law—written, ſo not na-"turally by birth, *&c.* no more than theſe letters I "write were naturally on this paper: but by outward de-"ſcriptions, by ceremonial legal types τα του νομου work-"ing upon them as ſo many graving tools," *&c.* Thus our author, in the hurry of his zeal to deprive the Gentiles of the law of nature, is obliged, if he retains any propriety in his contraſt, to maintain, that the Jews were born with the ceremonial law of Moſes naturally (even in the ſtricteſt ſenſe of the word *nature*) written on their hearts! And, a little after, ſpeaking of the difference between Jews and Gentiles, he ſays, "The "Jews had the ceremonial law by nature (birth), the "Gentiles not by nature, but only by tradition of theſe "things from their fathers," *&c.*!!! But why ſhould I wonder more at any thing that ſuch a writer can ſay? ——As to theſe and his other abſurdities, it is not worth

worth while to run through the text and context with them, in order to expoſe them at greater length; eſpecially as he himſelf acknowledges, he wanted either paper or time enough, or both, for ſhewing how his diſſertation agrees with the ſcope of the apoſtle's reaſoning.

On the whole, this friend of yours may, for aught I know, be a very learned man; but, by the ſpecimen I have ſeen of him, it does not appear to me, that he has hitherto learned to reverence the ſcripture, or even to read it with attention; ſo that I have ſeen nothing of him fit to draw the reſpect due to one of its ſerious and attentive readers. The ſolemn impertinent cant with which he begins and ends his diſſertation, is too thin a vail to cover the profane uſe of the ſcripture that runs through the body of it; yea, the one rather ſerves to make the other the more remarkably nauſeous. As I hinted before, he ſhould by all means print in defence of a cauſe, about which he is ſo zealous. Only it would be proper for you to adviſe him to wait till he has more leiſure, and can beſtow more attention, than he has done on the preſent occaſion, that he may not affront himſelf before all who have a Bible in their hands.

Having taken my leave of your friend, I am not diſpoſed to detain you long with that part of the controverſy that lies without the line of the ſcripture. I am not anxious to trace the extenſive influence of the fables or legends propagated by legiſlators and prieſts concerning their intercourſe with their gods, in order to give a ſanction to political inſtitutions or particular ſyſtems of laws. Cicero had better acceſs than I to turn over the writings of the ancient Pagans. I am content to take his noted account of the law of nature, as giving the common ſenſe of the cool obſervers of nature, both in his own and former times, while he defines it thus, *Ad quam non docti ſed nati, non inſtituti ſed imbuti ſumus* *. To this I ſhall add the joint witneſs of two of the moſt noted atheiſtical writers of our own age. Voltaire, in a late publication, diſclaiming ſeveral pieces as falſely a-

* In Engliſh the ſenſe may run thus: "The law, which we receive not "from inſtruction but from birth, not from education but from inſtinct."

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ſcribed to him, proceeds thus. " Buſy bodies and in-
" formers may do their worſt. I never wrote in verſe
" or proſe on religion, either natural or revealed; but
" in a king's palace, and under his inſpection, I com-
" poſed a poem on the law of nature, the principle of
" all religion; that primitive law which God has im-
" printed in our hearts, and which teaches us to tremble
" at the miſchief we do to each other: a work greatly
" inferior to the ſubject; but the pure morality of
" which ought to be cheriſhed by every one, and the
" name at the head of it univerſally reſpected." Mr Hume, in his hiſtory of the Tudors, ſays, " So deep-
" ly are the ſentiments of morality ingraved in mens
" breaſts, that it is very difficult even for the preju-
" dices of falſe religion totally to efface them." Bluſh now if you can. Muſt thoſe who profeſs to believe a ſupernatural remedy provided for natural depravity, be reminded from ſuch a quarter of the foundation of all religion, of the only natural handle by which any of us can propoſe to move the attention of his neighbour ſo much as to enter into converſation about the remedy? And as to the plea againſt Deiſts, nothing can be more ridiculous, than to give up the only fund of argumentation by which we can propoſe either to draw their attention, or ſtop their mouths and put them to ſhame.—— So much for human teſtimony. As to the concurrence of the prophets and apoſtles, I am well ſatisfied I have that clear and full in the preſently conteſted paſſage of Paul, though he had ſaid no more on the ſubject, as your friend in his haſte would have it thought. Yea, from the trials I have ſeen, I have reaſon to be more and more confident, that this paſſage of Paul will remain to the world's end, firm as a rock, to repel the aſſaults of every Hutchinſonian who ſhall be ſo raſh as to puſh his head againſt it. In fine, I am ſo well ſatisfied with the teſtimony of Paul, that I ſee no reaſon to be greatly moved either way, by what Cicero, Voltaire, the late book called *Sophron*, or any other ancient or modern, can ſay, either for or againſt it. For it will be abundantly enough for ſuch a one as I to be taught to hold faſt the faithful word, though, during the conteſt about

it, I ſhould be obliged to let go every thing elſe. Nor am I in any fear of undervaluing Moſes, (as through ſome ſtrange inattention you alledge I do), while I acknowledge, with Paul, that I learn from him what I could never have learned from nature, to wit, *that the worlds were framed by the word of God, ſo that things which are ſeen, were not made of things which do appear.* And while I attend to the uſe Paul makes of this, I am taught the uniformity of the divine workmanſhip from firſt to laſt. I learn that it is the ſame God that created the world, who, by the word of faith, calls into being righteous perſons from among the ungodly. Thus the belief of the revealed account of the creation is ſet forth as a magnificent pattern, and a moſt inſtructive confirmation of ſaving faith. With great freedom and confidence, then, may I ſay, that the ſimpleſt reader, who, with Paul for his guide, in this connection, learns from Moſes, that the worlds were framed by the word of God, obtains much more important inſtruction from the firſt chapter of Geneſis, than can be gathered from all the elaborate diſcoveries ſought out of that chapter by the learned Mr Hutchinſon, that haughty enemy of the faith which Paul preached, that impudent oppoſer of the grace, in defence of which Paul (not to mention his Lord and Saviour) ſpent his ſtrength and ſpirits, and at laſt poured out his life.

While I have Paul's teſtimony for the law of nature ſo clear on my ſide, what muſt I think of your reminding me of what has been wrote againſt it by your philoſophical friend, in his *Human nature ſurveyed by philoſophy and revelation?* Do you ſeriouſly think his reaſoning, either about the law of nature, or the ſupernatural cure of remorſe, ought to have weight with me! I wiſh you could prevail with that philoſopher to join his forces with your learned friend the commentator we have now been conſidering, that they might try their united ſtrength on the ſeveral paſſages that have been referred to as containing Paul's teſtimony for the law of nature, and compoſe ſomething fit for public view. What a curious production might we then ſee!

## LETTER VIII.

### LUCIUS to his friend C. D.

*March* 8. 1759.

——— You are not ſo clear about the law of nature, but that you may be *apt to ſee ſome force* in ſuch reaſoning! yea it ſeems no material point to you, whether there be any law of nature or not! As by this I am made to underſtand plainly enough how you are diſpoſed toward the Hutchinſonian hereſy, I think I muſt be as plain with you, and let you know, as well as I can, how I have been, and ſtill am minded about it.

When I firſt conſidered Hutchinſon's ſyſtem of what is called natural philoſophy, and his imagination of the motion of the heavenly matter in the actions of fire, light, and air; I thought here is a new world-maker, and a quite new ſcheme of the workmanſhip of God; offering to ſucceed the Newtonian, that had ſet aſide and ſucceeded former ſchemes. But whereas there had been ſome difficulty in reconciling thoſe other ſchemes to the plain language of the Bible, held ſacred in Chriſtendom; and they had reſted in this, that the Bible was never deſigned to teach mankind philoſophy, but ſpake to all men of the works of creation according to the appearance they made to them all; this new ſcheme of theſe works pretended, with the utmoſt confidence, to come with no leſs authority than that of expreſs revelation; and Moſes, the ſacred writer, was in the boldeſt manner appealed to for the truth and certainty of it.

The queſtion then was, How is this to be ſeen in Moſes, which never man ſaw in him before? And for this it was ſaid, that, by a due conſtruction of the language wherein he wrote, it would moſt evidently appear, tho' it was not ſo manifeſt in any tranſlation. And to pave the way to the right underſtanding of that language, the LXX verſion and Chaldee paraphraſe, with helps taken from the Arabic dialect, were all ſo condemned, as nothing brought from theſe could be admitted as any objection againſt the ſenſe Hutchinſon thought fit to give

any Hebrew word; though without theſe, or ſome of them, it had not been poſſible at this time of day to underſtand one line of Hebrew.

The next thing was, to ſee if this new ſyſtem could appear from this new conſtruction of the Hebrew, ſo that it might be ſaid to be revealed in the Hebrew Bible. As I attended to this, I found Hebrew words adapted to that new ſyſtem, even as experiments had been adapted to different and oppoſite hypotheſes and ſyſtems of philoſophy before; but I could ſee no ſuch thing as any expreſs revelation of that ſcheme of God's workmanſhip. I could not find any thing ſaid by Moſes, like the ſame matter of the heavens going into the action of fire in the orb of the ſun, proceeding from thence in the action of light to the bound of the world; and, becauſe there is no void in this whole matter that fills the world, returning to that orb again in the action of air. Nor could I find it any where ſaid in Hebrew words, that this is the made emblem of the Trinity. Nor could it appear to me any where ſaid by Moſes, that this ſame matter, in the action of fire, light, and air, was the *Elahim* worſhipped by the oldeſt idolaters, in place of the inviſible *Elahim* repreſented thereby.

Then obſerving what ſort of divinity was to come out of this new manner of explaining the Hebrew, I found that as there was a labour to adapt ſeveral words very fancifully to the philoſophy, ſo was there to adapt the words of Hebrew to this divinity, not altogether ſo new, but as little founded in the Bible, *viz.* a Trinity, wherein one Godhead is fitly repreſented in a maſs of matter, and three divine perſons fitly exhibited to the view of mankind in three different modifications of that ſame matter. —— A Chriſt compounded of two perſons, the one divine, and the other human; the divine leaving the human to ſuffer, and ſo to make the atonement by himſelf. —— An atonement, even a conditional, univerſal redemption; — with the power of man's will, independent of the divine decree, to fulfill the condition! — A Chriſtian world, or Chriſtendom, not antichriſtian! no, not the Roman church; but ſuch as the Mahometan world, the Deiſts, Arians, Socinians, Quakers, and the

the low church of England, againſt whom a ſpirit of perſecution, as violent as ever was in the Roman church, is manifeſt in the declaration of this whole doctrine.

While I perceived this Hutchinſon ſetting up for an infallible interpreter of the Hebrew language, ſo that to deny his tranſlations, was much the ſame as to deny revelation, as well as to caſt off common ſenſe; it was very odd to me, to ſee him playing in the moſt childiſh manner with Hebrew words. *Hoadly*, now Biſhop of Wincheſter, being the chief of the low church, and ſo the main object of his ſpite, had his name turned into Hebrew letters, which ſounded *Hodli*; and this is a word of the Bible ſignifying a naughty or vain perſon, or ſome ſuch epithet of reproach. And thus Hoadly is confuted and condemned by revelation! Even as it is pointed againſt the Quakers by one of his diſciples, calling them *Zamzummim*. But his account of *Berith* and of *Cherubim*, on which he lays ſo very much ſtreſs, and which is a good ſample of his manner of explaining the Hebrew, appeared to me ſo contrary to all the light I could have from the New Teſtament as well as the Old, for underſtanding theſe words, that I thought I behoved to be firſt out of my ſenſes, before I could affirm Hutchinſon's ſenſe of Hebrew words to be revelation.

You may judge, then, how it would go down with me, to hear it maintained with great confidence, that there is no knowledge of the eternal power and godhead, no ſenſe of the being of God, nor of his judgment in man, without this ſame revelation, *viz.* the philoſophy and divinity which Hutchinſon has been adapting to the words of the Hebrew Bible. And you are apt to ſee the force of reaſonings for this: As for example: 1. Becauſe they who had no view of this revelation, could not ſee the power of God to ſalvation; they could have no ſenſe of eternal power by the things that are made, nor any dread of deſtruction from that power. And becauſe they could not ſee one God in three perſons manifeſted to them in the ſame matter, moving in three powers, they could not perceive any thing of godhead, nor know of God at all by his works. And becauſe they knew not the diſtinguiſhing character

of

of the true God, amidſt ſo many idols and vain imaginations darkening their fooliſh hearts, there was no ſuch thing as any notice of God from his works in their conſcience. 2. Becauſe there are no innate ideas, as Locke ſaith; therefore there is no inſtinct in man, diſtinguiſhing him from the brutes, whereby he can perceive God in his works of creation, or be ſenſible of his judgment, and dread his diſpleaſure. And becauſe, as Locke alſo ſaith, all our ideas come by our ſenſes, all our knowledge by reflection on our ſenſations; and it is alſo manifeſt, that God teaches us in the ſcripture by emblems, metaphors, parables, allegories, types, and hieroglyphics; therefore there can be no knowledge of the Deity, without the emblem of divine works, imagined by Hutchinſon, and deſcribed in his Hebrew. 3. Becauſe Deiſts, and Quakers, who have the ſame meaning with them, hold the light of nature ſufficient to guide man to happineſs without any revelation; and ſo it is needleſs to ſpeak of revelation to them; the only way of confuting and confounding theſe baſe pretenders to reaſon and light within, is to deny the light of nature altogether: and therefore, whoſoever maintains that light, however he ſhew the inſufficiency of it, gives up the cauſe of revelation to theſe infidels, and ſupports them againſt God and his word.

And you are apt to ſee force in ſuch reaſoning! As you would dip a little in philoſophy, I dare ſay you are thus apt to make a curious philoſopher. I would have you next conſider, if you be apt to ſee the force of the philoſopher's eſſay to ſhew, that matter has the power of motion; or if you be apt to ſee the force of what Locke ſays for the poſſibility of matter's thinking, or to be, with him, not clear to deny it: and with this aptneſs, you will be very fit to ſympathiſe with the poor Gentiles, who had no other *Elahim* but Hutchinſon's machine.

The wiſdom of the ſcribe was critical ſkill in the letter of the Old Teſtament, aud the wiſdom of the Greek was what we call philoſophy. The world by this wiſdom knew not God, and remained ignorant of his character after all their labour in that wiſdom. Yea, it

was

was not by that wiſdom that what is known of God by his works was manifeſt in their conſciences; for it ſerved to darken their hearts as to that. And ſhall we now ſay, that without a way of explaining the Hebrew, now found out, to countenance a new ſcheme of philoſophy, we can have no knowledge of God, nor know that there is a God at all?

The Son of God came to manifeſt his Father's name, whom he ſaid the world knew not; and he did this according to the Old Teſtament. And while he and his apoſtles referred always to that, and ſpake of it as the letter, in a parable, whereof what they declared was the ſpirit, and likewiſe the truth of the prophetic types and figures; did they ever meddle with the explication of Hebrew words, to make out the truth of any thing they ſaid, from the import of the roots of that language? Or, in all the contention they had with the Jews about the interpretation and ſenſe of the Old Teſtament, did they once blame them for a wrong tranſlation of any word? They made the Trinity known; but this to be underſtood only in Chriſt. We have not from them the leaſt hint of a Trinity viſible in the heavens, repreſenting the inviſible. They made no uſe of Hutchinſon's revelation, in making God the Saviour known, or ſhewing his character to the world that knew it not: but in declaring it to the Gentiles, that knew the leaſt of it, they always ſuppoſed them knowing there was a God to whom they were accountable, (Acts xiv. 15. 16. 17. and xvii. 24. 28.). For they applied themſelves to man's conſcience, his proper inſtinct, where this is manifeſt; and they convinced all men of ſin, from the knowledge of God and his law in their conſciences; as you may ſee Paul doing, when you read Rom. i. 19. 20. 22. and ii. 14. 15. The manner of the Hutchinſonians treating theſe and other ſcriptures objected to their ſcheme, is a too manifeſt evidence, that they have no ear to give to any revelation but that of Hutchinſon, and that their faith is nothing elſe but the belief of that which is as foreign to the light of nature, and to the ſuperadded light that ſhines into mens hearts from the face

face of Chriſt, by the Old and New Teſtament revelation, as darkneſs is to the light.

What is known of God, in every man that holds the truth in unrighteouſneſs, is manifeſt in them all; for God hath ſhewed it to them by his works; not by any ſyſtem of philoſophy, far leſs by Hutchinſon's imagination of God's works, or his fancies about his words; but by ſuch an appearance as his works make to the conſcience of every man that is capable of ſin; by which they all underſtand his eternal power and godhead. Even the philoſophers had this light, which cannot be utterly extinguiſhed from the heart of man, however darkened. They knew God, and acknowledged not only eternal *power*, but alſo *wiſdom* and *goodneſs*, as eſſential to the maker of the world; though ſcrupling by their reaſonings on his goodneſs, they were not thankful, ſo held the truth in unrighteouſneſs. And as the Creator could not be beheld in his works without ſovereignty, we ſee Nebuchadnezzar having a very lively ſenſe of this, when recovered from his brutality, and brought to think, as a man, of the divine providence about him, Dan. iv. 25. Eternal and ſovereign power, wiſdom, and goodneſs, is the eternal power and godhead, which is manifeſt in all men, and ſhewed to them by the things that are made. And this was the only Trinity ſpoke of among the Gentiles: for they turned theſe divine attributes into perſons, and ſpake ſo of divine Goodneſs, Wiſdom, and Power, that the fathers imagined them to be ſpeaking of the Chriſtian Trinity, which is only to be ſeen in Chriſt: for thus they underſtood Plato ſpeaking of the *Logos*, and his Father, and the Soul of the world. If Hutchinſon had taken this Trinity, he might have found full as much ground for it in the ſcripture, applying his fire, light, and air to it, as for his Trinity appearing to him in the motion of the heavens, which he imagines, and much more ground of evidence for its being known among the Heathen.

As to the ſcripture: 1. With reſpect to Goodneſs, it tells us, God is love, manifeſted in giving his Son to be a propitiation for our ſins. And the emblem of this divine love is fire. "Love ſtrong as death, jealouſy

"cruel

"cruel as the grave, the coals thereof coals of fire, "the flame of *Jah.*" 2. Wiſdom is a ſcriptural name of the Son of his love, called alſo the *Logos*, which the fathers thought the ſame with Plato's *Logos*; and light is the ſcriptural emblem of him. 3. Power. The ſcripture calls the Holy Ghoſt the Power of the Higheſt; and his emblem is the force of the action of air. And he is named *Ruach*, and *Pneuma*, even as air, breath, or wind is. And as to any thing like a Trinity known among the Heathen, beſides the ſovereign Goodneſs, and Wiſdom, and Power eternal, underſtood by the things made, as they appeared to every man, which they imagined as three perſons, there is no ſuch thing to be heard of from among them.

After it has been ſo long doubted, if there be ſuch a thing as one of mankind incapable of the ſenſe of a Deity, and the dread of his judgment, are you ready to hearken to them that would perſuade you, all mankind are really ſuch, but they alone who have the ſenſe to perceive and acknowledge Hutchinſon's — whirligig?

## LETTER IX.

### LUCIUS to his friend C. D.

*March* 26. 1759.

— — — — I thought you very far gone in the Hutchinſonian way, when I found you adhering to it, even on that ſide from which the late Lord Preſident Forbes declined, who was the only man that could make Hutchinſon intelligible by our common capacities, and whom Hutchinſon owned as his friend, though differing from him about the light of nature and conſcience In this difference the Preſident had the experience of all mankind on his ſide, as is now acknowledged even by the atheiſtical philoſophers of this day, as you may ſee by ſome of their late eſſays and diſſertations. They have left the old atheiſtical cant about the prejudices of education, ſtill inſiſted on by Hutchinſonians. For after they have diveſted themſelves of all thoſe prejudices, they

 find,

find, by the hiſtory of mankind, and by experience, that the dread of an inviſible power, from a conſciouſneſs of inward diſorder, is deep laid in human nature. As to ſpeculation, aſide from experience, I think I mind of ſome common place in our ſchool-divinity, againſt the Socinians denying the light of nature in the conſciences of men. And what is ſaid againſt innate ideas by Locke, who believed the Hottentots had no ſenſe of a Deity, and was reckoned a Socinian, might be pled in behalf of the Socinians on that queſtion, even as ſome of your Hutchinſonian writers now plead it. I have alſo heard ſome Quakers talking to this purpoſe, That man by the fall utterly loſt all knowledge of God, who was pleaſed to recover him by inſpiring mankind with his Spirit, or light within, the true light that lighteth every man coming into the world, even that ſame light that convinces men of ſin. But this is only a round-about way of ſetting forth the undeniable fact, even the experience all mankind have of the light of nature and conſcience, while, from its exiſtence, they would infer the ſufficiency of it to more than making ſinners inexcuſeable. And the Hutchinſonian writer you have been reading, ſeeing the force of this inference, makes himſelf ridiculous, as they are, by his denying the exiſtence of nature's light; why? — becauſe their wild conſequence from it is to him undeniable.

I have of late often wondered how it came, that ſome followers of Hutchinſon were ready to allow that he might be wrong in more points than one; and yet were ſo zealouſly adhering to this, that Preſident Forbes could not hold, as if it were a moſt fundamental point. For though you think it not material, it appears now a moſt material point to them. But my wonder ceaſed, when I conſidered, that nothing can ſerve more effectually to evade the force and blunt the edge of the conviction of ſin, which we labour by any means to avoid. And, ſo whatever they let go, this muſt be held faſt as their ſhield till they can find a better. This therefore is moſt material to them. And it muſt alſo be material to all who regard the goſpel, and the truth as it is in Jeſus; becauſe it would ſhut the only door by which that truth can enter

ter the heart of man. How vain is the pretence to ſupport revelation by overthrowing conſcience and the light of nature!

You tell me, you thought you underſtood nature and conſcience in ſome of the lights wherein they were ſet by Hutchinſonians, better than you did ſome other ways of ſpeaking on theſe points that you had heard. I know not what ways of ſpeaking you have heard, and did not underſtand, concerning nature and conſcience: but what has been long ago learned from Paul's words on that matter, (Rom. i. 19. 20. 21. 23. 32. & ii. 14. 15.), and which you have often heard, appears to me abundantly plain, and agreeable to experience. Now, I cannot conceive what light nature and conſcience could be ſet in to your underſtanding by thoſe who deny them altogether, and ſo ſet them quite out of all lights. But if you mean the lights they ſet Paul's words in, which you underſtood better than by the light others ſet them in, then I muſt think you underſtand well that Paul ſays, The eternal power and Godhead of the Creator could not be ſeen from the creation! And you likewiſe underſtand, that Paul's Gentiles, who, not having the law, were a law to themſelves, were only the Chriſtian Gentiles! If this be the caſe, I ſee not how I can offer any ſcripture to your underſtanding, as finding you incapable to view it in any light wherein I am capable to ſet it: for if you cannot take it ſpeaking your own experience, how ſhall you take it ſpeaking of ſupernatural things?

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